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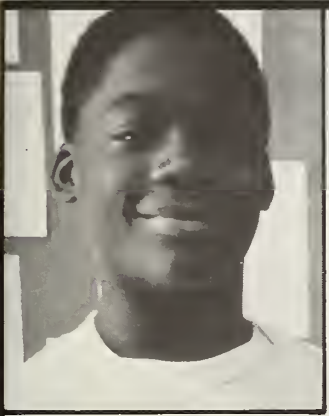


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# Food & Nutrition

✓  
"America's children  
are worth it."  
Nancy Reagan

January 1988 Volume 18 Number 1



## Helping Kids "Just Say No"





**"America's children  
are worth it."** Nancy Reagan

THE WHITE HOUSE

October 13, 1987

Dear Friends:

Over the past several years, I have encouraged Americans to join me in a campaign to rid our nation of drug and alcohol abuse.

I am gratified that the United States Department of Agriculture has responded with enthusiasm. Employees throughout the Department are involved in a wide variety of creative activities in support of the campaign.

In particular, the Food and Nutrition Service has undertaken a vigorous information program for employees, the public and, especially, the children in schools served by your school nutrition programs.

I commend your initiatives in working with dairy producers to print the "Just Say No" to drugs message on the side panels of school milk cartons; in sponsoring poster and essay contests for elementary school children; and in enlisting FNS employees to carry the message to their communities.

This issue of Food & Nutrition illustrates the importance of individuals and whole communities working together to find solutions to the problem of drug abuse, and thereby offering our children a brighter future.

Again, thank you. Please keep on caring and helping. America's children are worth it.

Sincerely,

Nancy Reagan



# Just Say No

**W**hile drug use by our nation's youth has plagued our society for many years, the situation has been steadily worsening.

Drugs and drug culture are glamorized by music and television, while athletes and public figures are indicted and jailed for drug abuse—or found dead of overdose. Media attention focuses on children who experiment with drugs at an earlier and earlier age, and drug availability is shown to be rampant.

Among growing public concern about drug abuse, the White House spearheaded an anti-drug campaign in 1983. It wasn't, however, until three elementary school children, inspired by First Lady Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" message, started the first "Just Say No" Club in 1985 that the campaign got underway.

Now Mrs. Reagan is the honorary chairman of the Just Say No Foundation, a nonprofit organization that links and coordinates the 1,700 school clubs across the country. The Foundation receives support from national organizations, such as 4-H and Girl and Boy Scouts of America; private companies

and foundations; numerous celebrities; one federal agency—Action; and one federal department—Agriculture.

## **All USDA agencies are contributing**

USDA is the only department uniting all of its agencies and offices to collectively join the "Just Say No" cause. Each USDA agency has designated a "Just Say No" representative and has drawn up a plan of action for its contribution to the initiative. These plans have been compiled into one catalog and distributed to each agency to allow for the greatest possible exchange and sharing of ideas.

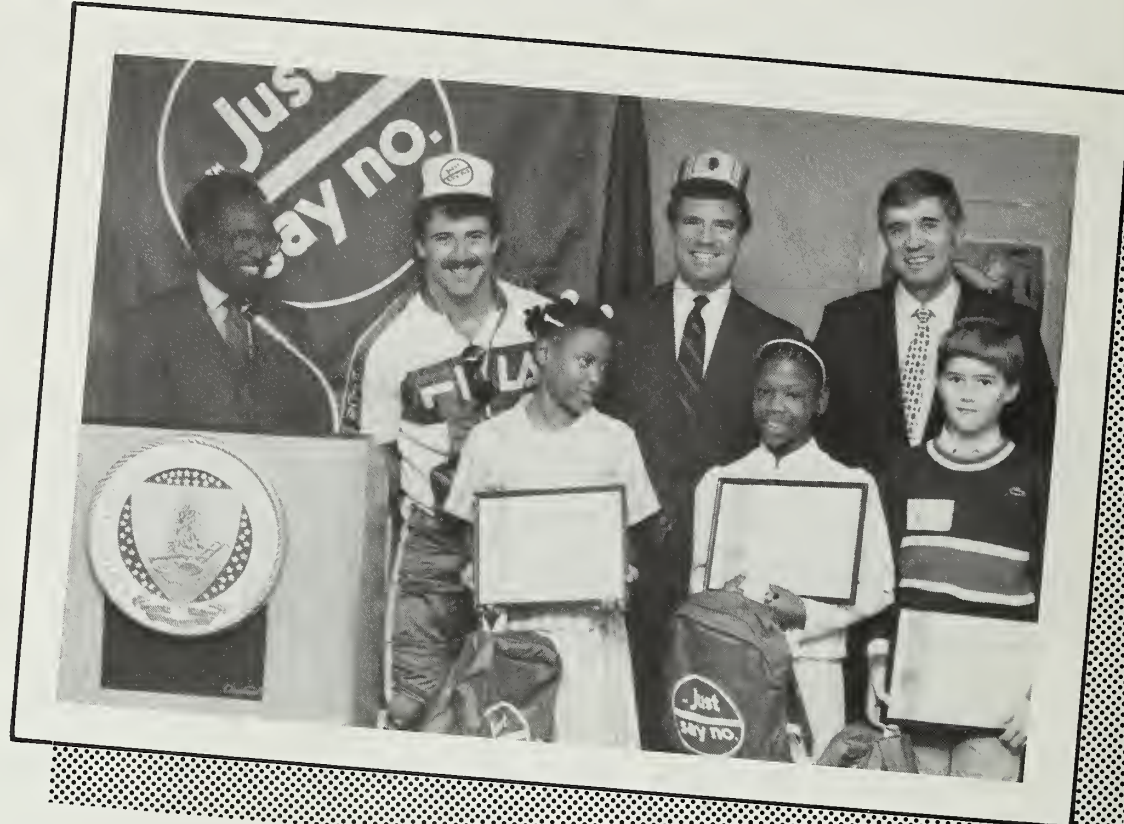
Mrs. Reagan and the Just Say No Foundation have been very supportive



In Portsmouth, Ohio, this spring, children of all ages took part in a "walk against drugs," one of many sponsored by local communities to support the "Just Say No" campaign.



At FNS' "Just Say No" to Drugs Day, three students—Keante Fears, Jean Johnson, and Geoffrey Morris—received awards. They are pictured (left to right) with: school principal James Harris, Redskin Craig McEwen, Assistant Secretary John Bode, and Deputy Secretary Peter Myers.



of USDA's extensive efforts. "We've been very happy with Agriculture," says Tom Adams, Foundation president. "You found out what needed to be done and you're doing it. You've been very good about creating awareness in the community about our program."

In 1986, Assistant Secretary John W. Bode recognized the need to promote the "Just Say No" campaign in schools. Bode, a father himself, feels strongly about the need to control drug use among school children and, therefore, was eager to contribute to the campaign.

Bode initiated the Department's effort, with the assistance of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). FNS is the one USDA agency ideally situated to get the message out to schools.

### Variety of activities help reach children

One way the message is reaching school children is on milk cartons served through the National School Lunch Program. FNS was encouraged that the dairy industry joined in this effort.

FNS is also using its seven regional public information offices to place and promote the use of "Just Say No" public service advertisements in thousands of local newspapers nationwide.

In addition, FNS and the American School Food Service Association are combining efforts to raise student awareness of the "Just Say No" message and to encourage the formation of new clubs. FNS and ASFSA are working closely together in determining where their efforts may be used most effectively.

ASFSA is considering several proposals, one of which is to coordinate activities such as a national poster and essay contest. Since virtually all school food service directors are members of ASFSA, the Association can give national direction and leadership to local, state, and national activities.

"Just Say No" clubs stay busy with four types of activities—educational, recreational, service, and "peer refusal." Peer refusal involves learning the "Three Steps to Say No":

- Step 1: Figure out if what your friend wants to do is okay.
- Step 2: If it's wrong, say "No."
- Step 3: Suggest other things to do instead.

At an age when peer acceptance is so important, saying "No" to their friends is probably the hardest lesson these children face. Yet, as Bode has observed first-hand, more and more children are making the right choice.

"When I first heard about the 'Just Say No' clubs in schools, in my mind I was doubtful they'd attract great numbers of students. But as I've traveled around the country visiting schools, I've been astonished by the vitality of the clubs and the number of kids actually saying 'No.'"

"These organizations are helping kids recognize the acceptable alternatives to drugs."

"Just Say No" clubs offer peer reinforcement to children by helping them realize they are not alone in wanting to avoid drugs. The activities of the clubs help spread the "Just Say No" message throughout the schools and communities.

### Special day began campaign at FNS

FNS, too, is spreading the message to its community of employees. As a kick-off to its campaign, FNS held a "Just Say No" Day in November. FNS Administrator Anna Kondratas, Deputy Secretary Peter Myers, and Assistant Secretary Bode were all there to give their support to the anti-drug campaign.

Special guest speaker Craig

McEwen of the Washington Redskins football team stressed that we must not depend on drugs to help us through the occasional rough times we face.

Assistant Secretary Bode presented awards to two students from Washington's Van Ness Elementary School, who were winners of an FNS-sponsored poster contest, and to the winner of an essay/poetry contest sponsored by a northern Virginia community homeowners' association.

Other events of the day were a panel discussion by parents and children of Straight, Inc., a nationally recognized drug treatment program, and a presentation by representatives of the Alexandria Police Department's Crime Prevention Section and Vice and Narcotics Section.

Throughout the coming year, FNS will continue working with ASFSA, schools, and local communities promoting the "Just Say No" message.

Bode encourages employees of USDA and state and local agencies that work with USDA to carry the "Just Say No" message home to their children and communities. "The drug problem has touched so many families," he says. "There's hardly a person, in or out of government, who hasn't known someone who has abused drugs."

"We have to fight this problem everywhere it exists. The cause is so important."

*article by Catherine Whitehurst  
photos by Larry Rana and  
courtesy Portsmouth Daily Times*



# Getting The Message To Children

**F**or more than four decades, schools, USDA, state agencies, and food companies have been partners in providing nourishing meals to children through the National School Lunch Program. Now, some new partnerships are helping get the anti-drug message to children. Here are some examples:

## Pet Dairy Gives "Just Say No" A Boost In The Southeast

Kids are used to being told, "Drink your milk, it's good for you." But, "Read your milk carton"? That's something new.

This year, in many schools across the country, kids will be seeing a daily reminder of the "Just Say No" message on milk cartons used in the National School Lunch Program.

Pet Dairy, headquartered in Johnson City, Tennessee, is one of the major sponsors of the "Just Say No" movement in the Southeast and was the first dairy in the nation to incorporate the now familiar "Just Say No" logo on its school-distributed milk cartons.

Since April 1986, Pet has printed "Just Say No" messages on more than 90 million half-pint milk cartons used by schools in their food service programs.

### "Returning something to the community"

Ralph Gombert, Pet's director of marketing, explains that the company is interested in returning something to the community, not only with jobs, but in service opportunities like "Just Say No."

Pet Dairy has used milk side panels to show information such as good dental practices and pictures of missing children as well as to raise money for

needy youngsters.

"The 'Just Say No' campaign seemed like a natural for us," says Gombert.

Pet has worked with the Just Say No Foundation to spread the anti-drug

message through many activities. One way they have done this is by mailing to 750 elementary schools throughout the Southeast informational packets encouraging the formation of "Just Say No" clubs.

As an incentive for fourth, fifth, and sixth graders to participate, Pet gives away prizes such as "Just Say No" banners and sponsors ice cream carnivals. Pet also presents U.S. Savings Bonds and citizenship awards to deserving students.

For other companies interested in helping, Gombert recommends contacting the national Just Say No Foundation or state organizations.

"If you have a local promotion idea, the national organization will be very flexible in working with you and will coordinate the use of the logo to ensure a consistent message is being promoted," he says.

### Many communities have gotten involved

Throughout Tennessee, interest in helping kids stay away from drugs is growing. The Tennessee Department of Education has been very active in organizing a "Just Say No" effort, and in what's called the Tri-Cities area—



"Just Say No" has become a regular part of school lunch in many areas, thanks to companies like Pet Dairy, which is printing special messages and illustrations on milk carton side panels.



which includes Bristol, Pet's homebase Johnson City, and Kingsport—"Just Say No" is especially strong.

At Johnson Elementary in Kingsport, former school food service worker Wilma Roberts is part of the solution when it comes to drug and alcohol awareness. Roberts, who recently became a teacher's resource aide at the school, has always been interested in students' well-being. This year she is PTA chairperson for "Just Say No" activities at Johnson.

"It's important that students have friends who can say no to drugs," says Roberts, who is promoting a drug-free environment with a variety of activities that are fun for children.

Events already planned include a 1950's sock hop with trophies; slogan and button design contests; and community service projects.

"Just Say No" clubs in the Tri-Cities area have a variety of local sponsors. For example, in Johnson City, a regional department store is sponsoring the club at Towne Acres Elementary. The clubs at Kingsport's John Sevier Middle School and Johnson Elementary are sponsored by local chapters of a national civic organization, the Optimist Club.

#### **School staff are supportive**

School administrators and staff are eager to help.

School food service managers, for example, are incorporating "Just Say No" activities in their school food service programs in a number of ways. In addition to using the special milk cartons, some are serving meals on styrofoam trays with the "Just Say No" message embossed on them. Other

ideas being considered include displaying the slogan on murals, banners, table decorations, and meal tickets.

School superintendents are also involved. Jimmy Fleming, superintendent of schools in Sullivan County, participated in Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander's drug awareness task force.

"As a result of this task force, we recognized we could face a real drug and alcohol problem. One of our recommendations was to set up a drug prevention effort, which turned out later to be the 'Just Say No' program," Fleming says.

The reaction to the "Just Say No" program has been positive, Fleming says, because so many people are affected. "It's difficult to say you want to educate a child and not be concerned with habits that may be developing in public schools."

When he visits other communities he tells them they must set their own standards and decide what to emphasize in an anti-drug effort. He tells people they need to get involved because their children are at stake.

#### **An example of what communities can do**

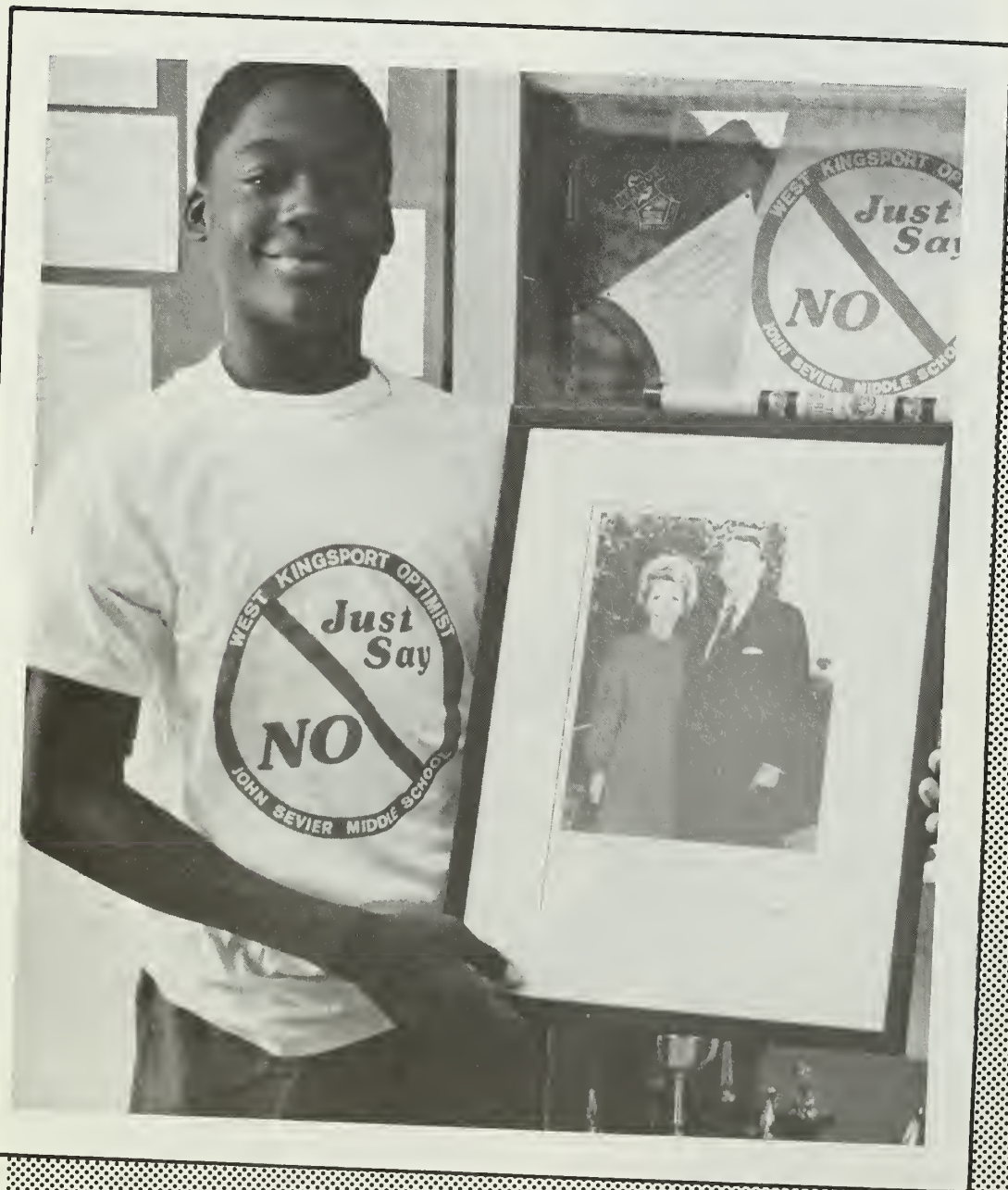
What's happening in Tennessee is a truly cooperative effort, with private industry, civic groups, parents, teachers, and school administrators working together to help children make good choices.

As school superintendent Jimmy Fleming puts it, "Aren't our children worth it?"

For more information, contact:  
Clay Coble, Director  
Tennessee Child Nutrition Programs  
Department of Education  
208 Cordell Hull Building  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219-5338  
Telephone: (615) 741-2927

Ralph Gombert, Director of Marketing  
Pet Dairy  
P.O. Box 0, CRS  
Johnson City, Tennessee 37602  
Telephone: (615) 282-2711

*article and photos  
by Kent Taylor*



Tim Hall and other Kingsport students are proud of the autographed picture they received from the President and Mrs. Reagan for starting one of Tennessee's first "Just Say No" clubs.



## Cincinnati-Based Pierre Frozen Foods Lends Merchandising Know-How and Support

In the Midwest, employees of the Cincinnati-based Pierre Frozen Foods company have taken a personal interest in the "Just Say No" campaign, inspired by the commitment of Pierre's director of manufacturing, Fred Rutherford.

When President and First Lady Nancy Reagan went on national television to support the "Just Say No" initiative, Rutherford was one of the millions of viewers across the country.

"The television program was still on my mind as I drove to work the next day," he says. "It occurred to me that we could use Pierre's merchandising skills to help sell the 'Just Say No' program to school children."

Pierre Frozen Foods is a leading processor of pre-portioned meat products and has for many years supplied school lunch programs with processed products made with USDA-donated beef and pork.

### Company responded quickly to idea

Within days of the President and First Lady's pleas for support, Pierre was furnishing schools throughout the country with red, white, and blue "Just Say No" banners and stickers.

Now, a year later, Pierre has distributed more than 100,000 "Just Say No" banners and more than 4 million stickers in thousands of school cafeterias.

Pierre is currently promoting the "Just Say No" school food service merchandising program through direct mail and advertising in the *American School Foodservice Journal*.

Rutherford says that one of the most rewarding aspects of the promotion is the many letters of appreciation Pierre Frozen Foods has received from school food service directors who care about their students.

"Some schools have built a special occasion around a 'Just Say No' sticker day," he says. "A Frankfort, Kentucky, school invited Governor Martha Lane Collins to attend, and an Oshkosh, Wisconsin, school extended an invitation to Nancy Reagan herself."

"This has been our most successful promotion ever," says Pierre's government relations manager Jean Harris.

"Not only have we had the highest response we've ever gotten, all Pierre employees have taken an enormous amount of pride in the fact that we are helping students say no to drugs."

For more information, contact:  
Jean Harris  
Pierre Frozen Foods  
9990 Princeton Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45246  
Telephone: 1-800-543-1604 outside Ohio, or 1-800-582-7116 in Ohio.

article by Lawrence Rudman

## McCluskey Foods Tells Students To "Be Smart" About Drugs

Idaho students are reminded to "Be Smart, Don't Start" in a steady stream of materials provided by McCluskey Foods, a commercial food wholesaler and distributor.

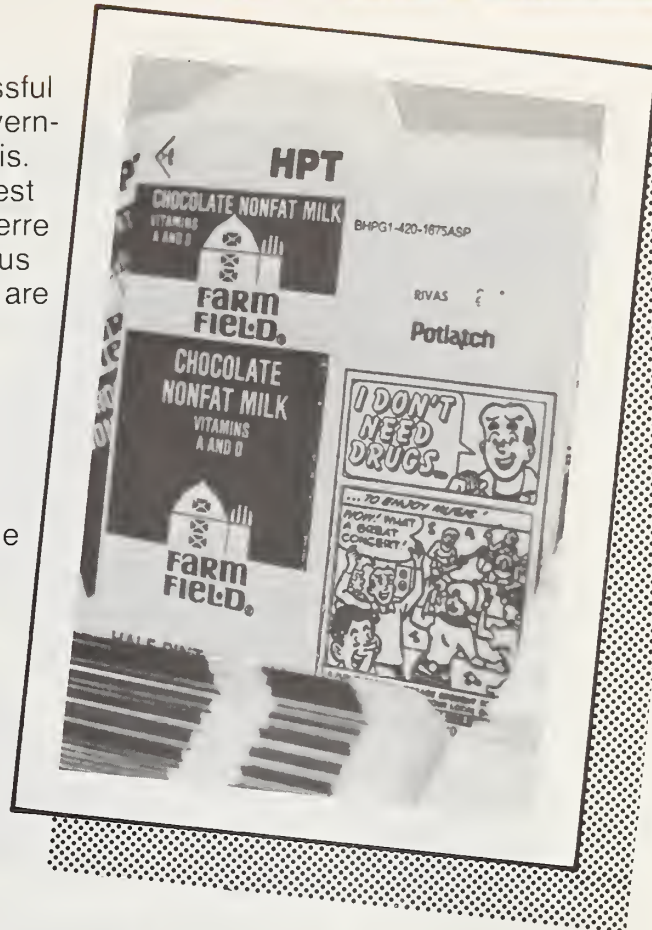
The Idaho Department of Education approached McCluskey to carry the message to students because of the firm's long history of close association with school districts across the state. McCluskey is under contract with the Department of Education to deliver USDA commodities to schools, elderly feeding programs, and institutions.

Laura Burns at McCluskey says, "It's very appropriate that we do this kind of thing because we're in such close contact with the districts." Along with food, McCluskey has always provided schools with newsletters and other materials about health, fitness, and other topics.

The target for the anti-drug materials is fifth and sixth graders. "We feel we need to reach students before they're exposed to the greater temptations to experiment which they'll experience in junior high," says Burns.

McCluskey gives schools a variety of materials, including posters and stickers (which can be used on lockers as well as car bumpers) and a variety of pamphlets targeted to teachers, parents, and students.

Schools can also request from McCluskey videotape and slide show



Milk cartons from California's Adohr Farms feature cartoons from Archie Comics. Archie's message to kids: "I don't need drugs."

programs provided by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. McCluskey recommends schools show the 2- or 3-minute musical programs during lunch periods to catch everyone at once.

For more information, contact:  
Laurie Burns  
McCluskey Foods  
P.O. Box 1390  
Caldwell, Idaho 83606-1390  
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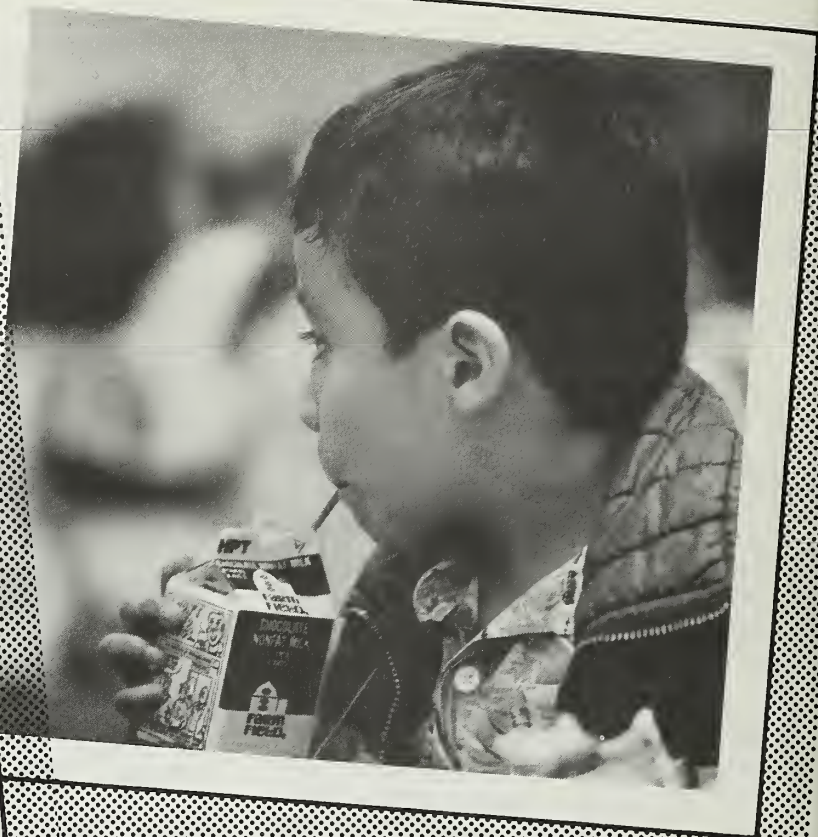
article by Tino Serrano

## Cartoons Lead The Way In L.A.

In Los Angeles, more and more products are showing up in school kitchens with anti-drug and alcohol messages, according to Anita King of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

It began in school year 1986-87 when milk from Adohr Farms began arriving in half-pint cartons with an Archie cartoon filling one panel. The cartoons portrayed different situations where Archie and his friends defer from drugs. Archie Comics supplied the "I Don't Need Drugs" public service messages and Adohr incorporated





Whether they are drinking their milk or eating frozen fruit "slush," these Los Angeles students get daily reminders to say "no" to drugs.

them into the milk packaging.

This school year the Balian Ice Cream Company is printing "Just Say No to Drugs and Alcohol" on the packages of two of their products—"Orange Frosties" and the "L.A. Fruit Blend." Both are 100-percent fruit juice which is "slushed" and frozen and eaten out of the cup with a spoon.

Los Angeles students also see the "Say No" message on styrofoam cups which the district buys from Cocoa Cola. Coke provides the artwork free and will even custom-design cups for schools' anti-drug efforts.

King feels the movement is gaining momentum and she expects students will see more anti-drug and alcohol messages as more manufacturers get involved.

"I've got some sample napkins sitting here in front of me, for example," she says, "with several different 'Say No' messages to choose from.

"We're serious about getting the word to these kids," King says, "and these all help."

For more information, contact:  
Beth Louargand, Food Services  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
P.O. Box 2298 Terminal Annex  
Los Angeles, California 90051  
Telephone: (213) 742-7064

## Student's Design Helps Spread Word in Alaska

In Alaska, state school food service association president Linda Stoll is playing a key role in spreading the "Just Say No" message.

As a result of her work, two of the "big four" Alaska school districts are already using milk cartons with a special student-designed anti-drug message on them, and the remaining two districts are expected to pick up the idea soon.

Stoll attended the ASFSA annual conference in July and resolved to do something to get the "Just Say No" message to students. On her flight home, she spotted a fellow traveler drinking from a milk carton with such a message.

When she returned to Alaska, she approached Anchorage high school student Nueharth Shane, whose T-shirt design she'd seen at an anti-alcohol fundraising run. Shane had drawn a stop sign superimposed over cigarettes, beer, and alcohol, and the words, "Stop, Think. Just Say No to Drugs and Alcohol."

Matsunuska Maid Dairy agreed to put the message on half-pint milk cartons they supply to districts in

Matsunuska and Kenai.

In addition to using the artwork themselves, company managers are also making it available to another dairy which serves Anchorage and Fairbanks. If the second dairy uses the idea, Shane's bright red stop sign will reach three-quarters of the students in the state.

Stoll has other plans, too. The Alaska ASFSA, for example, is designing a menu planning form with the same artwork, which they will make available to every district. Carr's, a large supermarket chain throughout Alaska, is considering putting the message on their shopping bags, and Matsunuska Maid may put the message on quarts and half-gallons of milk sold in stores.

Not only young Alaskans, but their parents, too, will get the message to stop and think about drugs and alcohol.

For more information, contact:  
Linda Stoll  
Matsu School District  
P.O. Box 1688  
Palmer, Alaska 99645  
Telephone: (907) 376-5381

article by Tino Serrano

article and photos  
by Tino Serrano



# Communities Fight Drug Abuse

**A**cross the country, people concerned about children are working to help them understand the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

In the following articles, we look at how parents, teachers, and civic leaders in three communities are giving children the support and encouragement they need to stay away from drugs. School food service directors and health educators in these communities are playing important roles not only in teaching children, but in generating widespread community interest in drug abuse prevention and treatment.

## Concern Leads To Action In Small Midwest School District

"If the kids want drugs, they can get them."

"The price of cocaine is becoming competitive with pot."

"Alcohol is the number one drug of abuse."

The voices come from a grade school principal, a school lunch director, and a teacher, not in Chicago or Miami, but in Palmyra, Wisconsin, population 1,500, quintessentially hometown, rural America.

School lunch director Connie Jansen, social sciences teacher Nick Niehausen, and Donna Kalnes, principal of neighboring Eagle Elementary are only three of hundreds of parents, residents, teachers, and students who not only recognized the threat of drugs in their communities, but decided to do something about it.

Palmyra now has a community-wide drug and alcohol awareness effort. Included are prevention programs for elementary and junior high students, an intervention program for high school

students, and parent and support groups for students and family members. Every student in grades 1-6 has signed the "Just Say No" pledge.

### Problems apparent in early 1980's

The community first became aware of problems in the early 1980's when a physical education teacher discovered that an emotionally disturbed student's difficulties were rooted in drug abuse.

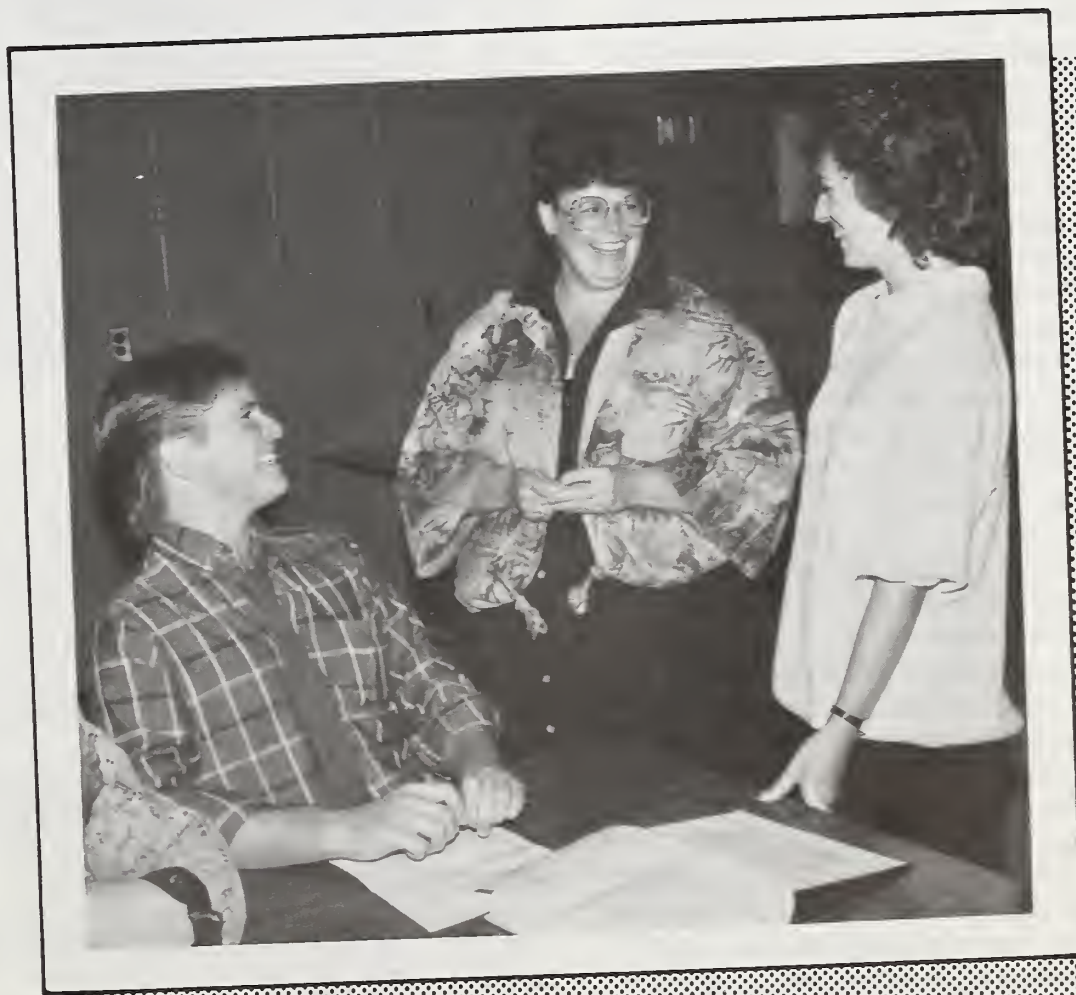
"After organizing a parents group, one parent offered to conduct training in drug prevention," says Donna Kalnes.

A survey of Palmyra/Eagle students

revealed the depth of the problem. In response to "Have you ever taken or drunk alcohol without anyone knowing it?", 18 percent of first through third grade students, 29 percent of fourth through sixth grade students, and 58 percent of seventh and eighth grade students said yes, they had. Another 39 percent of high school students said they had a friend who drank too much.

To begin dealing with the problem, the district instituted a pre-designed program called Project CHARLIE—Chemical Abuse Resolution Lies in Education.

"Basically a prevention-oriented program," Kalnes explains, "Project



Connie Jansen (center), food service director for the Palmyra-Eagle district, is active in anti-drug efforts.



CHARLIE is designed for elementary students and focuses on self-esteem, self-concept, building good relationships, and learning how not to let someone else speak for you."

At the junior high level, Palmyra/Eagle started a prevention-based program called "Choices," and at the high school level, a student assistance program called "Decisions."

Implemented with a Drug Abuse Intervention grant from the state department of public instruction, "Decisions" provides support, information, evaluation, guidance, and referral for treatment for students who show signs of a drug- or alcohol-related behavioral problem.

Recommendations for assistance may include participation in a community self-help group, referral to a community agency, or participation in a school support group.

### **School lunch director plays an active role**

As food service director for the district, Connie Jansen is in a unique position to observe any alcohol and drug disorders. Because of her closeness to students, Jansen volunteered to attend a workshop on drug and alcohol abuse prevention and intervention.

"I learned to differentiate between a student who was expressing real need for help and just student 'smart-talk', how to role play and lead a group, and how and when to make referrals," she says.

"I see the kids in a relaxed atmosphere. I can see when eating habits change, appetites change. I'm in very close contact with the kids."

Teacher Nick Niehausen, who doubles as coordinator of Palmyra High School's student assistance program, agrees that Jansen's availability to students during lunch periods helps the credibility of their drug and alcohol intervention efforts.

"The kids see Connie every day. They trust her. She's a real asset to the program," he says.

Community awareness and support are also assets, according to Niehausen.

"Community support in the Palmyra/Eagle District is phenomenal," he says. "More than 350 people turned out for an organizational drug and alcohol abuse awareness meeting in 1985."

Niehausen believes the district's efforts are paying off. "So far, 75 parents have signed a pledge to ensure that social events such as parties at home are alcohol and drug free, and have an adult chaperone present."

### **Signs of success are encouraging**

Project CHARLIE educational efforts at the elementary level result in greater acceptance of prevention and intervention programs at the high school level, Niehausen adds.

District administrator Lance Fanshaw agrees that they are seeing signs of success.

"I've noticed that the kids don't bend as easily as they used to. They are not afraid to say 'No,'" he says. "It makes things better for the kids, and it makes better kids."

For more information, contact:

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District Administrator  
Palmyra/Eagle Area School District  
Palmyra, Wisconsin 53156  
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*article and photo  
by Lawrence Rudman*

## **Florida Rotarians Make Saying No A Fashion Trend**

Thinking about what's best for children is what Robert Buffmire's job is all about. He's school food service director for Brevard County, Florida, and has been for 22 years. But his concern for children extends far beyond his job.

Buffmire is a member of the Cocoa, Florida, Rotary Club, which annually sponsors a number of service projects, many of which are youth-oriented. Buffmire, who is president-elect for the 1988-89 term, is especially proud of the role his club has played in supporting the "Just Say No" campaign.

"We have a lot of local drug arrests considering the size of the cities in this area," he says. "I read recently that 80 percent or more of the cocaine coming into the United States comes through Florida. Some of it is stopping and staying in the state."

"Our Rotary Club wanted to help law enforcement officials and schools keep a lid on the drug problems."

To promote "Just Say No," members purchased 1,000 tee-shirts printed with the anti-drug slogan. At a Rotary Club meeting planned especially for the occasion, they gave the shirts to the principals and two student representatives from each of seven area elementary schools.

Soon afterwards, the principals held special assemblies or other programs to pass out the tee-shirts and provide information about the dangers of drugs. In some cases, the shirts were the catalyst for a year-long series of "Just Say No" activities in the schools.

### **Gardendale Elementary is a good example**

One school that has been very active is Gardendale Elementary on Merritt Island. Gardendale's principal, Al Narvaez, is one of two elementary school principals who belong to the Cocoa Rotary Club and who were especially eager to assist with the project.

The Rotary Club provided enough tee-shirts for Gardendale's fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. The day after teachers distributed the shirts, students wore them to school for a special anti-drug assembly featuring Congressman Bill Nelson as guest speaker.

"The assembly was a 'mega-event' not only because it brought the congressman to school, but it also was the kick-off of Gardendale's 'Just Say No' club," Narvaez says.

Throughout the past year, the Rotary Club's tee-shirts have served as quasi uniforms for Gardendale's "Just Say No" club members.

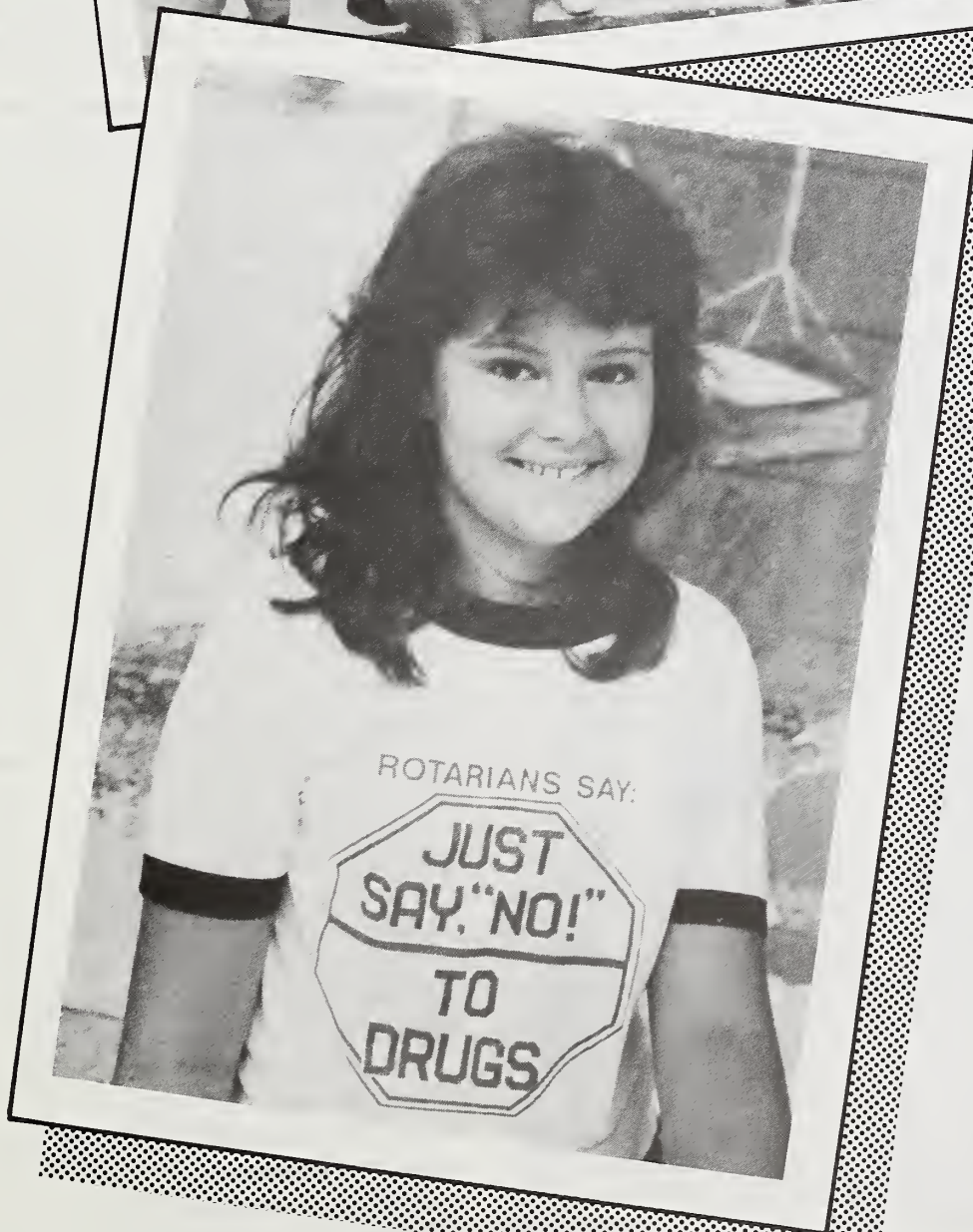
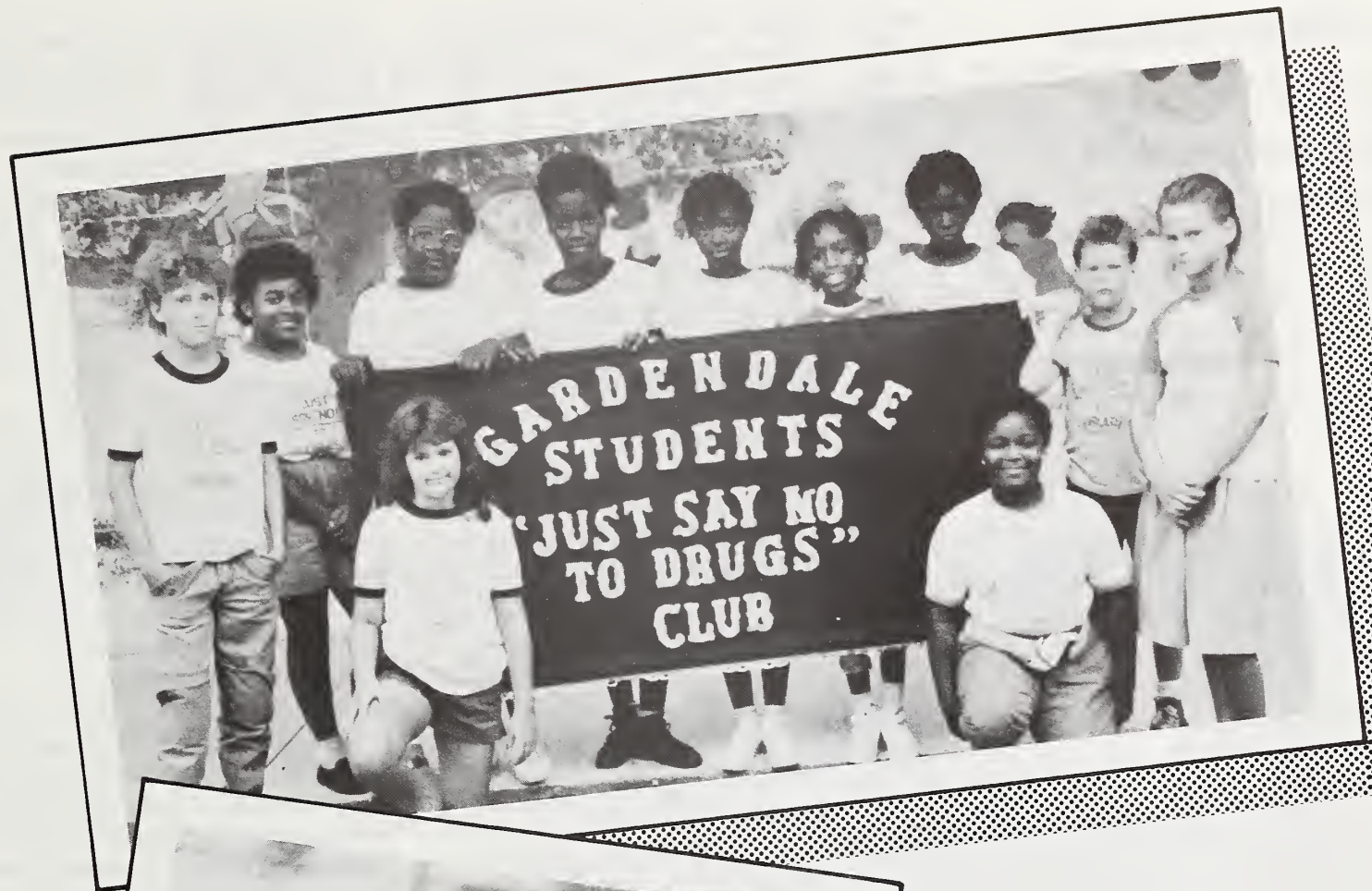
Members wear their shirts to school on designated days and often when there's no special occasion. The tee-shirts' faded colors give mute testimony of frequent washings and wearings.

### **Students' interest has remained strong**

A variety of activities keeps interest strong. Each fourth, fifth, and sixth grade class chooses a representative to serve on a school coordinating council which meets regularly with Principal Narvaez and other school staff to plan bimonthly "Just Say No" activities.

Activities have included classroom projects, such as making posters or having discussions on drug-related topics, and special programs with films and guest speakers.





Tee-shirts donated by Cocoa, Florida, Rotarians have made a big hit with area youngsters, including these students from Gardendale Elementary School.

Students have also participated in events like a "Hands Across Gardendale" breakfast for the community task force and the Merrit Island Christmas parade. For the parade, they made a club banner and carried it while chanting, "Just say no to drugs."

"That had a terrific impact in the community because it showed that children were really concerned," says Narvaez.

According to Gardendale's school counselor, Nancy Arnold, a few students have already been approached about drugs and have had a chance to say "no." The Cocoa Rotary Club won't be saying "no," however, to the schools that have requested the continuation of the tee-shirt project.

Because of feedback from school personnel and others about the worth of this "Just Say No" project, the Rotary Club has voted to purchase tee-shirts again this year for elementary school students.

For more information, contact:  
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*article and photos  
by Brenda Schuler*



# New Jersey Health Educator Gives Kids Information And Respect

Robert Pearson knows that no matter how wealthy or poor a community is, drug problems exist. Pearson is director of health, physical education, and athletics for the affluent Millburn Township schools in northern New Jersey.

Pearson has seen a lot in the 30 or more years he has been involved with Millburn schools. "Every community has drug problems," he says. "They would be foolish to deny it. We just work hard to solve our problems."

## Many approaches make his point

Pearson does his best to positively influence the lives of his students through the programs he heads. He uses many angles and techniques to reach children. The most telling is a little technique he employs with elementary school students.

He shows students a small gift, a box that is nicely wrapped and topped with a bow. Pearson says, "People talk about how the drug problem can be solved. I take the top off the box, take

the cotton out, and the youngsters see the mirror—an image of themselves.

"We talk about self-image, self-esteem. I can't teach that, but we can develop it by working on strengths and weaknesses. I tell children to do what they do well, what makes them feel good.

"I tell my athletic coaches to encourage our athletes. Give positive reinforcement, praise. Don't tear them down and belittle them. If I can get you to feel good about yourself, you won't want to get in trouble, get into drugs."

Pearson also believes in giving students as much information as possible on a variety of health-related topics, to let them make informed choices for their lives.

He says, "Even with my own children I have tried to not pass judgment on issues, but to give them as much information as possible, to help make them responsible for their own lives."

## Many programs keep agenda busy

Pearson works both within the regular classroom curricula and on many special programs throughout the year.

One interesting special program is an audiovisual unit on alcoholism for third graders. Called "Chug," the unit is from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Chug is a frog who lives under a bridge and eats whatever people throw down to him. According to Pearson, the program stresses that too much of anything, including alcohol, is no good.

With his athletes, Pearson stresses the need to be drug-free. All parents of athletes get a letter from him discussing the dangers of drugs and alcohol and telling them that the coach and athletic director don't want their youngsters to drink or use drugs.

Last year, Pearson ran a program for athletes that included a former athlete who nearly destroyed his life by using drugs. "He was a fine athlete," says Pearson. "But he's lucky to be alive. Most of his friends are dead."

## Community involvement is central to efforts

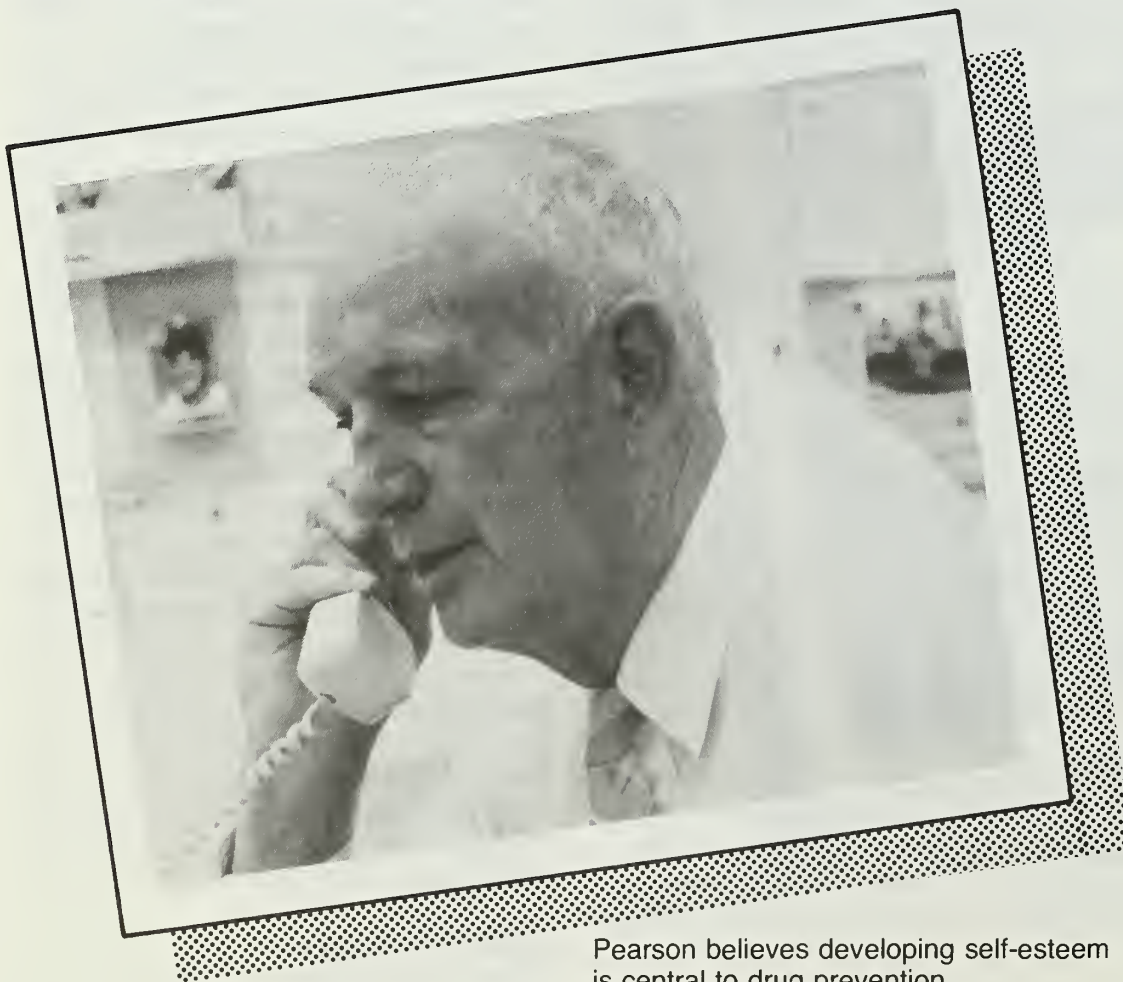
Much of Pearson's work involves the community. "We started doing programs on drugs with students and parents about 4 years ago. Parents were naive," says Pearson. "We wanted to open communication so they could know more about kids' involvement with drugs."

Millburn now has a very active PTA drug awareness committee. Indicative of their involvement in the subject is the commitment that their outgoing president, Gerri Silverman, has to it. She is on Nancy Reagan's speakers' bureau, speaking often and getting very involved in the anti-drug campaign on a state and national level.

The committee sends different literature out each year to students' parents. They have also held programs for teachers, for local chapters of Kiwanis and Junior League, and for the clergy. Pearson says this is so they can develop a broad group of people who can influence both adults and children not to use drugs.

"In Millburn, I've seen kids' attitudes change," says Pearson. "Today, students are more concerned about school work and the way they look. It's reflected in the way they act, dress, and treat you. The rebel thing—that defiant phase—has passed."

For more information, contact: Robert Pearson, Director Health and Physical Education Millburn Schools 434 Millburn Avenue Millburn, New Jersey 07041



Pearson believes developing self-esteem is central to drug prevention.

article and photo  
by Linda Feldman



# Putting Lives Back Together

**W**hat can drugs do to young lives? No one knows better than young people who have dropped out of school, lost jobs, or become alienated from family and friends because of drug abuse.

Rehabilitation centers, like the one featured in the following article, are helping young men and women regain control of their lives and replace destructive patterns with more positive ones. Often the process begins with understanding why they turned to drugs in the first place.

## Starting Over At Damon House

Damon House is a fixture in urban New Brunswick, New Jersey. Formerly an armory, its quiet gray exterior is deceiving.

The immaculate floors, the flowers that ring the building, the well-manicured patches of grass, the small vegetable garden next to the parking lot: These details give clues to how the fragments of 64 lives are being pieced back together, bit by bit.

Damon House is a residential, drug-free therapeutic community for drug and alcohol addiction. Of the 11 residential drug rehabilitation centers in New Jersey, Damon House is one of only a handful that accepts indigent people. About 99 percent of the 64 clients—most of whom are 18 to 35 years old—can't pay their own way.

About half of the clients come through the court system. The other half come on their own.

"Most of our clients come to us with nothing," says Ileen Bradley, Damon House's executive director. "Most have no money. Those who come from the court system come with the shirts on their back. They've all seen bad times,

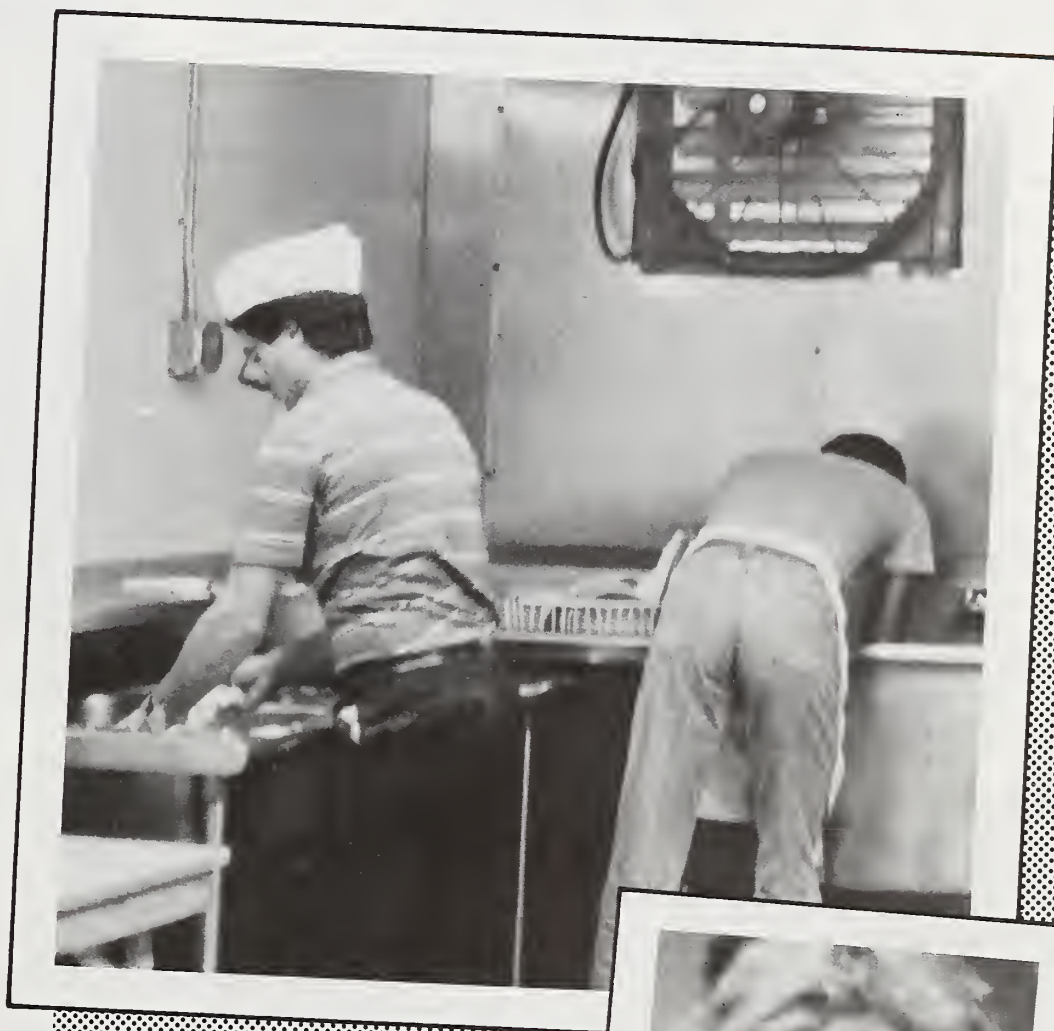
hard times. They are beginning to see the damage they've done to their lives."

At 32, Bradley has worked at Damon House for 6 years. Petite, blond, and very lively, she is dead serious about her work.

### Various agencies provide support

As Bradley explains, the program costs about \$17,000 per client per year. Support comes from a variety of sources, including the National Institute for Drug Abuse, state departments of health and welfare, and private donors.

USDA food assistance programs also help. Most Damon House



Work is an important part of life at Damon House, according to executive director Ileen Bradley (bottom photo). Above, two residents work in the kitchen, cleaning up after a meal.



residents are eligible for food stamps. Under national rules governing the Food Stamp Program, participants in drug rehabilitation centers can be certified by local food stamp offices. Centers then can buy food for participants' meals from retailers and wholesalers authorized to accept food stamps.

A representative from the local food stamp office comes to Damon House to certify eligible participants. "Food stamps offset much of our food costs and make a huge difference in our budget," says Bradley.

Because Damon House is considered a residential child care institution, it also receives support from the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs for meals served to residents who are under age 21. The facility gets \$1.42 per lunch and 91 cents per breakfast as well as USDA-donated foods.

### Teaching coping skills and sharing

While Damon House may be technically a "residential institution," it feels more like a large family.

"We are all brothers and sisters here," says Bradley. "We run the house as a family runs a home. We maintain the facility nearly completely ourselves. We have a maintenance crew, a laundry crew, a gardening crew."

Teaching residents to deal with responsibility and life's stresses is central to Damon House's mission.

"This is a tough program," says Bradley. "What we do here is give clients the most stressful, volatile situations while they are safely inside these walls. We have them find their weaknesses here and teach them to learn patience, sharing, how to cope. If they can make it here, they have a good chance of making it in the real world."

"Much of what we do is based on behavior modification. Clients here are involved in their own lives and in everyone's lives. They are involved in decisionmaking. There is a lot of group therapy and peer pressure."

Damon House residents progress through several levels, each with a different degree of independence.

"New clients begin with an orientation," Bradley explains. "They get to know the stringent rules, responsibilities, and expectations. Then they start at level one and work their way up."

At what's called "peer three," clients can go back to school. Damon House has a GED (Graduate Equivalency Degree) program, and clients can also go to college or a trade school. "Peer four" is what Bradley calls "re-entry into the real world." For about 6 to 8 months, clients live at Damon House, but go back out to work. If they are in school, they must also work.

"Our staff counselors work with the clients to find jobs," says Bradley. "Clients earn money and develop a savings account. They have to have enough start-up money to make it on their own."

After "peer four," clients have "after care" or "pregraduation." They live on their own, in space approved by the Damon House staff.

### Continuing support helps clients cope

To help clients deal with stress and control the urge to use drugs, pregrads come back every week to meet with their counselors. There are also support groups for them as well as for people who have completely left Damon House.

For Damon House grads, staying drug-free can be a lifelong challenge. "Their biggest problem," says Bradley, "is that they forget where they were—addicted to some drug. Outside pressures start again, people offer them drugs. It's hard to resist."

Some succeed, and some fail, but it is the successes that keep Bradley going.

"Most of those who succeed, who eventually graduate and stay straight, are high school graduates with some maturity. They know they can either straighten up or keep getting high until they die. They are the ones who understand that they really will die."

"The ones who don't make it don't realize that they are cheating themselves. We go on. They aren't cheating us. It's their lives they are playing with."

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*article and photos  
by Linda Feldman*

# "I'm gonna make it..."

Dave Bowman is one of the ones who knows it's his own life he is playing with. So is Sam Andrews. From very different backgrounds, they shared a common way of dealing with life's problems—getting high.

For those of us who are trying to find ways to help America's young people get free of or stay away from drugs, their stories are worth hearing. They have a lot to say about what it's like to be addicted, where it took them, and how at Damon House they are turning their lives around.

**Dave Bowman** is 20 years old, a curly-headed, good-looking blond from the suburbs in Jackson, New Jersey. Dave writes poetry and hopes to be a photographer. He looks like any other 20-year-old, except for the hole in his right arm.

"I tried marijuana, to know what it was like, when I was 14. Then I tried cocaine, to know what it was like. But then I was doing cocaine every day for 3 years ...

"My addiction kept me going. But there were nights when I would cry. I started to hate myself. For 6 months, I tried to commit suicide, to overdose on coke. Instead, I landed in the hospital twice.

"My mother visited me in the hospital and in jail. It was a terrible feeling. I got an infection from shooting cocaine. Mom sat in the hospital. I'll never forget the look on her face.

"I had a real good job. I was assistant manager of a furniture store, making \$400 a week. I started selling coke. Easy money. I found I could make \$800 just in one day. So I quit my job. I was my own best customer.

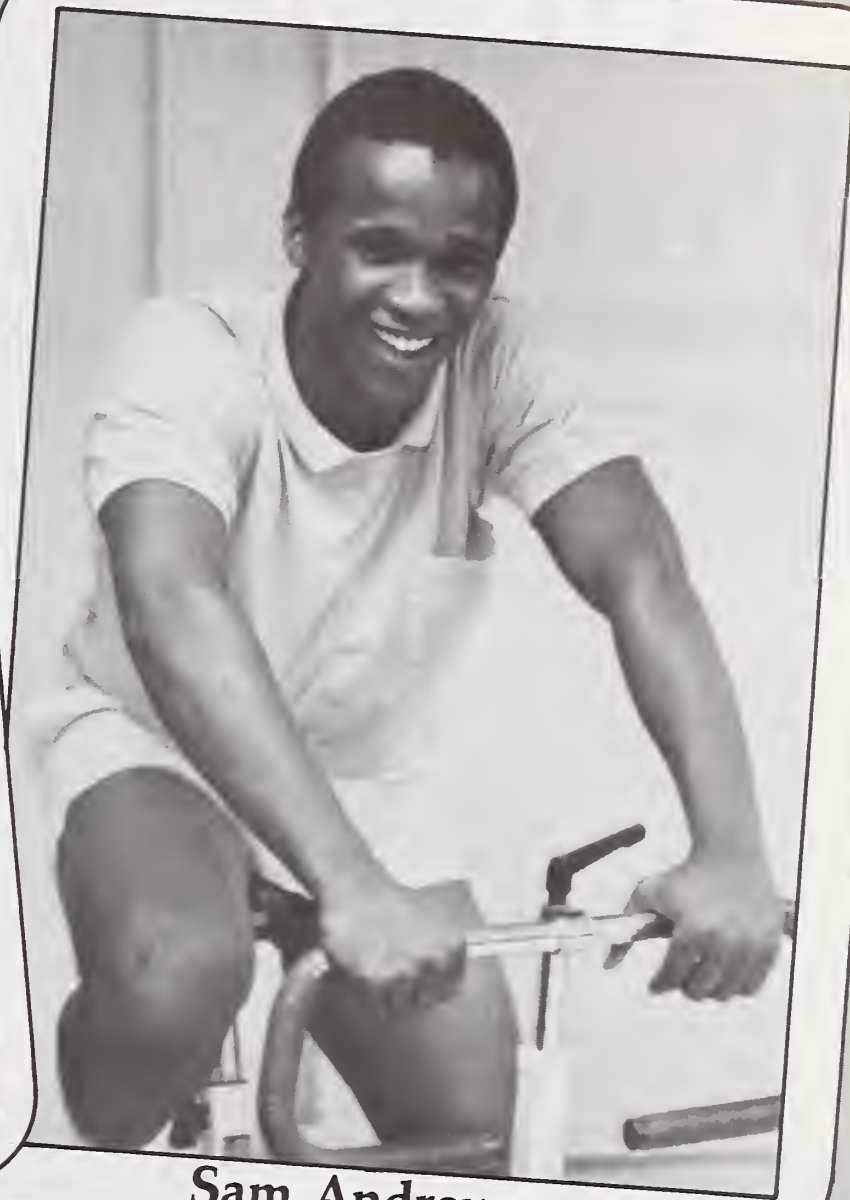
"I was dealing cocaine, but didn't get busted for that. I had codeine, 3 ounces of marijuana, mushrooms—I was busted for possession last September 30. My case finally came up in June. But I was arrested three other times in between.

"I had to do 90 days in jail or an inpatient facility. I spent 68 days in the Ocean County jail. The last 22 days of my sentence I spent here. When I





**Dave Bowman**



**Sam Andrews**

found out I could leave after that time, I didn't want to.

"I was here 3 or 4 weeks and saw a change. I feel good about myself for the first time since I was 14. I'm doing something positive. I want to get out of bed in the morning. I never really knew myself before ...

"If this program weren't here to take me, with no money, I would be out on the streets. Or dead.

"If I had one thing to say to kids today, I would tell them to look at the hole in my arm. I'd say, 'This is a joint. That's where a joint can lead.'

"How crazy it all seems ..."

**Sam Andrews** is 18 years old. He looks innocently handsome and is a glib speaker. He talks about doing constructive things with his life. Sam grew up poor in New Brunswick, New Jersey. This is Sam's story:

"Everyone was on welfare where I grew up. I grew up in a drug habitat. I was living with my mother. I didn't finish high school, although I went through twelfth grade a couple of times.

"I thought I could make a living selling drugs. I stole. Never worked. Didn't do anything constructive.

"I started with drugs when I was 8 years old. Everyone, mostly, that I knew was on drugs. My stepfather was an alcoholic. He recently quit. I look at him now as my role model.

"I drank with my cousins and uncles. Did marijuana, acid, then cocaine. Coke makes you think you constantly need it. You'll go to any extreme to get it. You'll hurt lots of people just to get high. And eventually end up in jail. Or dead. I got tired of it, so I came in (to Damon House) with my mom for an interview.

"I have to start my life over from scratch. When I first came here off the street, I learned to get a handle on issues we had to face on the street. That was peer one.

"Now I'm in peer two. I'm learning control, patience, tolerance. I never used to have any. Here you get pressured, have to put pressure on others.

"I used to be afraid of how others saw me. I used to put up a facade, project an image. I didn't want people to know me.

"I used to take drugs after a pressure situation. I'd have a fight with someone and feel like I had to get high to deal with the situation better. I was only running away.

"Here I'm learning to communicate and not hold everything in. 'Relate, relate, relate.'

"I'm gonna make it."



# Helping Mothers Protect Their Babies

**W**omen who drink alcohol, use drugs, or smoke cigarettes during pregnancy can harm their babies as well as themselves. That's a message WIC staff in many areas are giving to the pregnant women and new mothers in their care.

WIC, also known as the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children, is operated by state and local health agencies in cooperation with USDA. In the following articles, we look at how three local agencies—in Puerto Rico, California, and Washington State—are helping mothers become more aware of how what they do affects their babies' health.

## Puerto Rico WIC Participants Say "No A Las Drogas"

Several years ago, Lydia Figueroa, of Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico, did not think that drinking during the pregnancy of her firstborn was harmful. "He is a very hyperactive boy," she says of her now 9-year-old son. "I can see the effects of what I did then."

Ms. Figueroa is pregnant again. This time, there is no drinking, no smoking, and definitely, no drugs.

"I will make sure my new baby is healthy," she says.

The expectant mother is enrolled in Puerto Rico's Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). And it was at WIC clinic counseling sessions that she was told of the harmful effects of drinking alcohol or taking drugs during pregnancy.

### A priority for some time

Maria de los Angeles Diaz, deputy director of the Puerto Health Department's WIC program, says her agency's efforts against drug abuse go back several years.

In 1983, WIC clinics from the island's western region reported an increase in the number of pregnant women who were using alcohol and drugs. Local WIC staff sought assistance from the state agency headquarters. The request brought action.

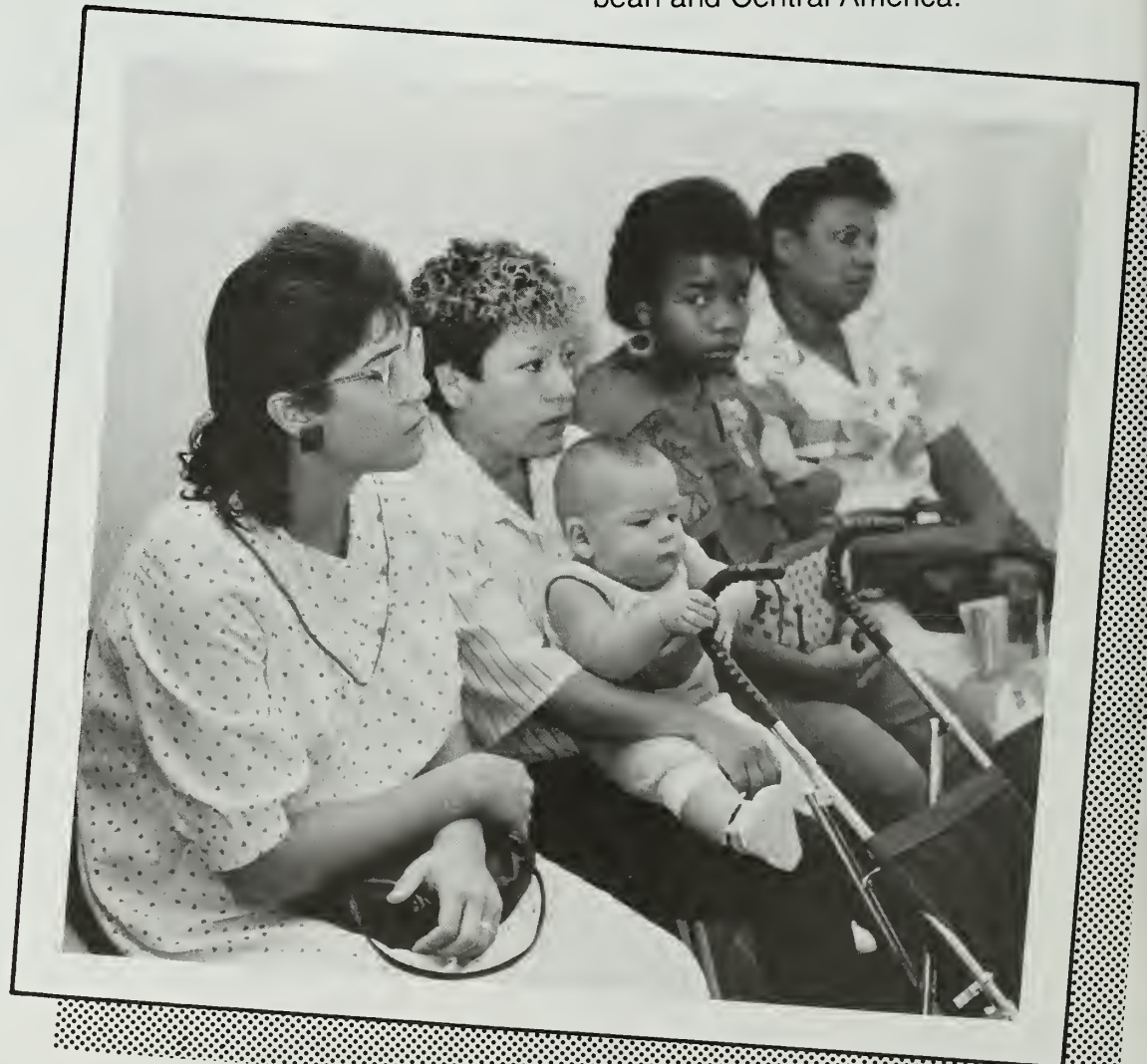
The health department moved to address the problem of care for the substance user and prevention through

education for all pregnant women in the program.

The first step, Diaz says, was to define as "at nutritional risk" anyone with a history of substance abuse. Another step was setting up a strong network of referrals for drug users.

The WIC agency holds monthly meetings with the Commonwealth's Departamento de Servicios Contra La Adiccion (DSCA), where staff go over new case records for potential participants at each agency.

Casa Reeduccion Ex Adictos (CREA), a private drug rehabilitation organization, also works closely with WIC. CREA began in Puerto Rico and now has centers throughout the Caribbean and Central America.



Mothers listen as a WIC nutritionist explains the dangers of using drugs during pregnancy.





Travelers on Puerto Rico's busy Las Americas Expressway can't help but notice this 30-foot sign, put there by the Departamento de Servicios Contra La Adiccion (DSCA).

### Efforts reinforce positive choices

Puerto Rico's treatment and prevention programs are helping women who have drug-related problems and encouraging women who are problem-free to stay that way.

"This is my first child," says WIC participant Pamela Martinez during a visit to the WIC clinic in Trujillo Alto. "I have never used any type of drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes. The information I have gotten here confirms that my lifestyle is best for me and my baby. That is a good feeling."

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P.O. Box 25220  
Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico 00928

*article and photos  
by Joe Dunphy*

"They let us know who in their half-way houses could be a participant in WIC," says WIC director William Torruella. "Many of the women qualify."

### Staff are taught counseling techniques

Close ties with DSCA resulted in training sessions where WIC nutritionists and clinic nurses are taught counseling techniques in drug abuse prevention. The health department and DSCA have collaborated to produce a number of training aids, both print and audiovisual, to get across the anti-drug message.

The materials run the emotional gamut from the gentle pleading of an unborn child in a letter to his mother to the stark visual effects of the film, "Born Drunk," that shows the distorted features of children with fetal alcohol syndrome.

"We try to relate the bad effects of substance abuse in all of our educational sessions," Diaz says. "We have material that shows these dangers both to the pregnant women as well as to those who are breastfeeding."

To reach women who need WIC and other social services, Puerto Rico has special outreach and counseling ses-

sions which are held in housing projects throughout the island. During the sessions, WIC nutritionists not only explain the availability of WIC and the need for good nutrition during pregnancy, but also the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

"The hardest part is to gain the confidence of the mother," says Maria Negrón, a WIC nutritionist at the Ponce Diagnostic Center, who visits nearby housing projects. "Once the young woman understands the counseling is confidential and we will not tell the police, we have won the biggest part of the battle."

"We have to treat her delicately," she adds. "The realities of what drugs can do to her baby can be very frightening to a young girl."

In treating pregnant drug users, WIC nutritionists work as part of a team with doctors, nurses, and social workers.

Negrón says her main concern is rebuilding the mother's health and strength through nutritious foods. "Most drugs users are underweight when they come to us," she says. "My part of the team effort is prescribing a proper diet for them."

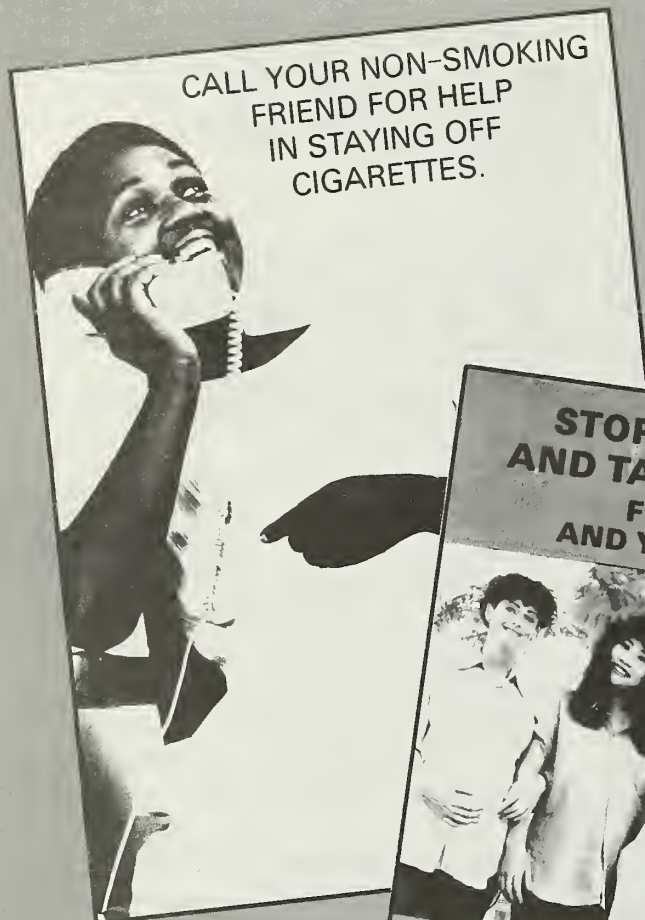
## WIC Agencies Team Up To Help Moms Stop Smoking

According to the U.S. Public Health Service, pregnant women who smoke cigarettes are more likely than non-smokers to deliver babies who are born prematurely, are small or underdeveloped, have respiratory and cardiovascular problems, or die within the first year of life.

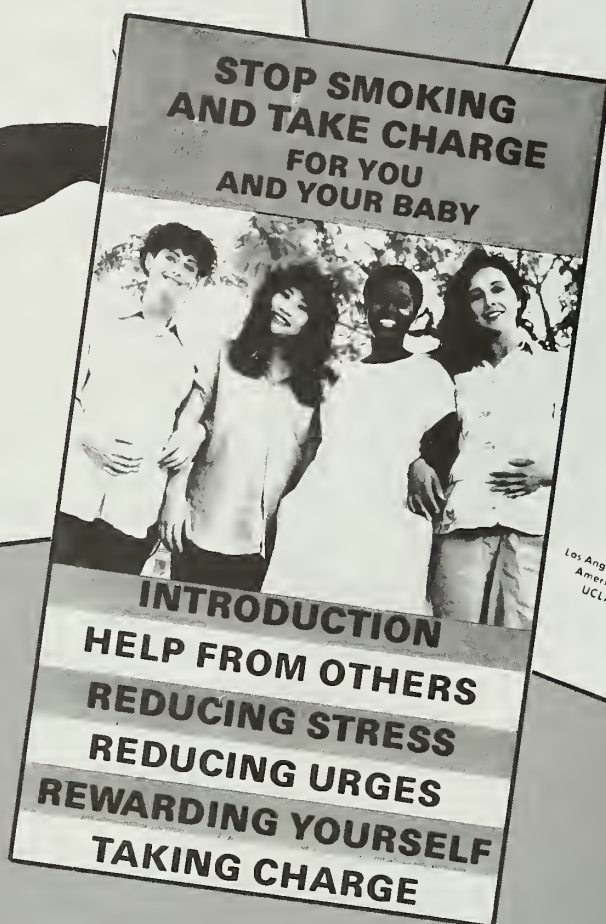
"Tragically," says James Swomley, managing director of the American Lung Association, "many women do not understand the serious health hazard of smoking while pregnant."

To raise awareness of the dangers of smoking during pregnancy, the American Lung Association initiated a two-step campaign to encourage pregnant women to quit. In a number of areas, WIC nutritionists are using materials from the campaign to help WIC participants stop smoking and increase their chances of having healthy babies.

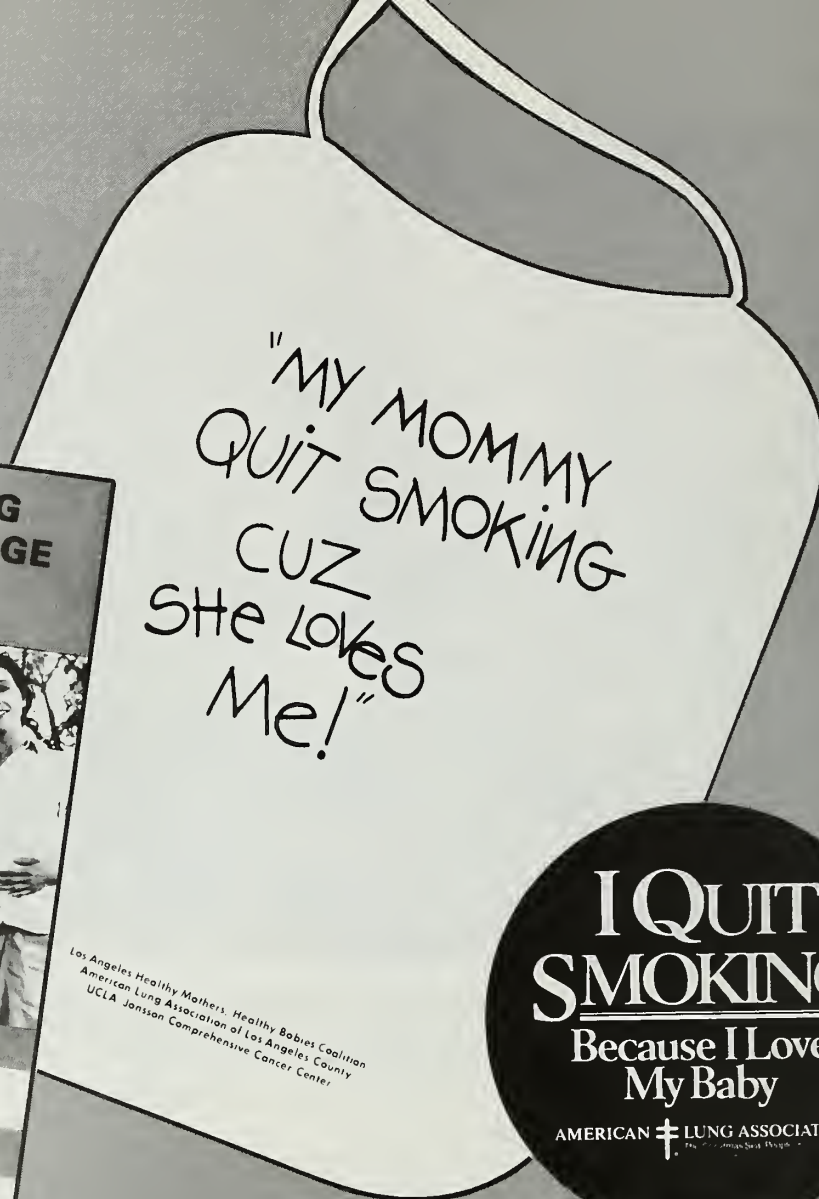




These are just some of the materials the Los Angeles REI WIC staff and the American Lung Association have developed to help mothers stop smoking.



Los Angeles Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition  
American Lung Association of Los Angeles County  
UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center



### Variety of helpful materials produced

The first phase of the American Lung Association campaign was targeted to doctors and health professionals. In 1982, the Association developed and distributed 40,000 copies of a smoking and pregnancy kit that included information on the dangers of smoking and a specific intervention program and materials to use with patients.

Last June, the Association launched the second part of the campaign with a "Freedom from Smoking for You and Your Baby" program. It includes a manual, an audio tape emphasizing the importance of exercise and relaxation in quitting smoking, and a poster featuring Joan London of Good Morning America, the national spokesperson for the campaign.

The program helps pregnant women quit smoking in 10 days. "Time is critical for a pregnant woman," says Margo Harris of the Washington State

American Lung Association. "The sooner a women can stop smoking, the less chance there is that smoking will affect her baby."

### WIC staff help mothers quit

WIC staff in Tacoma, Washington, are using the American Lung Association program to help pregnant women stop smoking early. From the start, they've worked closely with their local Lung Association chapter.

As Gayle Brandt, staff nutritionist for the Pierce County Health Department, explains, the staff had been interested in offering a stop smoking program for WIC and other health program participants for several years.

Together with the American Lung Association, Brandt tested the acceptability of the manual with 14 WIC participants who volunteered to help

evaluate it. All said it would be helpful to them when they felt ready to quit smoking.

"Getting ready is the hard part," says Brandt. Over 50 percent of the women coming into the Pierce County WIC program smoke. The American Lung Association estimates that nationally 32 percent of pregnant women, or more than 1 million people, are smoking at the beginning of pregnancy despite the Surgeon General's warning appearing on cigarette packs.

To be more effective in motivating, counseling, and providing support to women, the WIC staff took part in special training provided by the Lung Association in November.

### Similar activities in Los Angeles

The WIC program at the Research and Education Institute (REI) at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center is one of two in Los Angeles County that have



worked with the local chapter of the American Lung Association and the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition to develop a stop smoking program.

The multi-faceted program uses audio-visuals and brochures relying more on pictures than written information to help pregnant women quit smoking.

WIC participants receive a series of materials when they come in for their appointments. The first is a multi-page four-color booklet. Later, they take home a pocket reminder and several postcards with messages; a baby bib which says "My mommy quit smoking cuz she loves me" or "My mommy keeps smoke away from me cuz she loves me", and a certificate of congratulations when their children are born.

Participants also see two 8-minute slide-tape shows. Considerable planning and pretesting went into developing the materials. As in Tacoma, the staff were specially trained on how to counsel participants who smoke.

"Our main goal," says Shelley Marks, deputy project director for the district, "is to empower the women so they feel they can quit. We want them to feel they are in control of their health and their lives."

Funding for the project comes from the local American Lung Association, the United Way, and the UCLA-Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center. Future plans may include printing the booklets in Spanish.

#### **For additional information**

For more information or to obtain materials available from the American Lung Association, contact one of the Association's 136 chapters or branch offices. Posters are free. A charge of \$5.00 for each manual and each tape may be required (costs vary from chapter to chapter).

For more information on the materials developed in Los Angeles, contact:

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REI WIC Program  
2930 W. Imperial Highway, Suite 622  
Inglewood, California 90303  
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*article by Dee Amaden  
photos and illustrations from  
the March of Dimes, the American  
Lung Association, and REI  
WIC Program*

# Materials Available From The March Of Dimes

The March of Dimes, a nonprofit organization whose goal is the prevention of birth defects, produces a number of materials which can be used in WIC clinics, schools, and food stamp offices to educate clients about the dangers of using drugs, alcohol, or tobacco during pregnancy.

This past November, the March of Dimes launched a new educational campaign focusing on substance abuse by pregnant women. Called "Mommy ... Don't", the campaign features posters and brochures explaining the dangers of taking drugs, smoking, or using alcohol while pregnant, as well as the need for prenatal care.

A number of the materials available are listed below. A catalog of materials is also available from the March of Dimes. Some materials are free; other items may be purchased. Films, videos, and slide shows may be available for loan from your local March of Dimes chapter.

There are 138 chapters of the March of Dimes nationwide. To locate your nearest chapter, check under the white pages of your phone book under the March of Dimes. Or, contact the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, 1275 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, New York 10605, telephone (914) 428-7100.

Some of the materials available include:

**Films** (16 mm film and 3/4" or 1/2" video available)

- **Alcohol: Crisis for the Unborn** explores the hazards of alcohol consumption during pregnancy and the effects on parent and child (16 minutes).

- **Born Hooked** stresses the importance of prenatal care for mothers addicted to heroine or methadone (13 minutes).

#### **Film Strips or Slides**

- **The One of Us** looks at environmental hazards to the fetus, including drugs, smoking, alcohol, and environmental chemicals. There are two parts, 19 and 13 minutes each.

#### **Pamphlets, Posters, Buttons**

- **D\*A\*T\*A: Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco Abuse During Pregnancy** (Pamphlet)

- **Will My Drinking Hurt My Baby?** (Pamphlet, available in Spanish as well as English.)

- **Babies Don't Thrive in Smoke-Filled Wombs** (Pamphlet and button)

- **Think Twice! A Pregnant Woman Cannot Drink Alone** (Poster)

- **Two On A Match Is Bad Luck For You And Your Unborn Baby** (Poster)

- **Double Take! When You Take A Drug, Your Unborn Baby Does Too** (Poster)

## Will My Drinking Hurt My Baby?



**March of Dimes  
Birth Defects Foundation**



# Kids Reach Kids

**R**eaching kids through kids is the idea behind many successful educational activities. Here are two examples—the first, a state-sponsored conference aimed at building teen leaders; the second, a poster contest for children sponsored by the Food and Nutrition Service's Midwest region.

## Building Teen Leaders Is Goal Of Virginia Conference

It's costly in terms of school days lost and the toll it takes on grades. And when the push comes, substance abuse can take a life.

People at the Virginia Department of Education think it's important for school staff and students to work together on preventing losses caused by substance abuse.

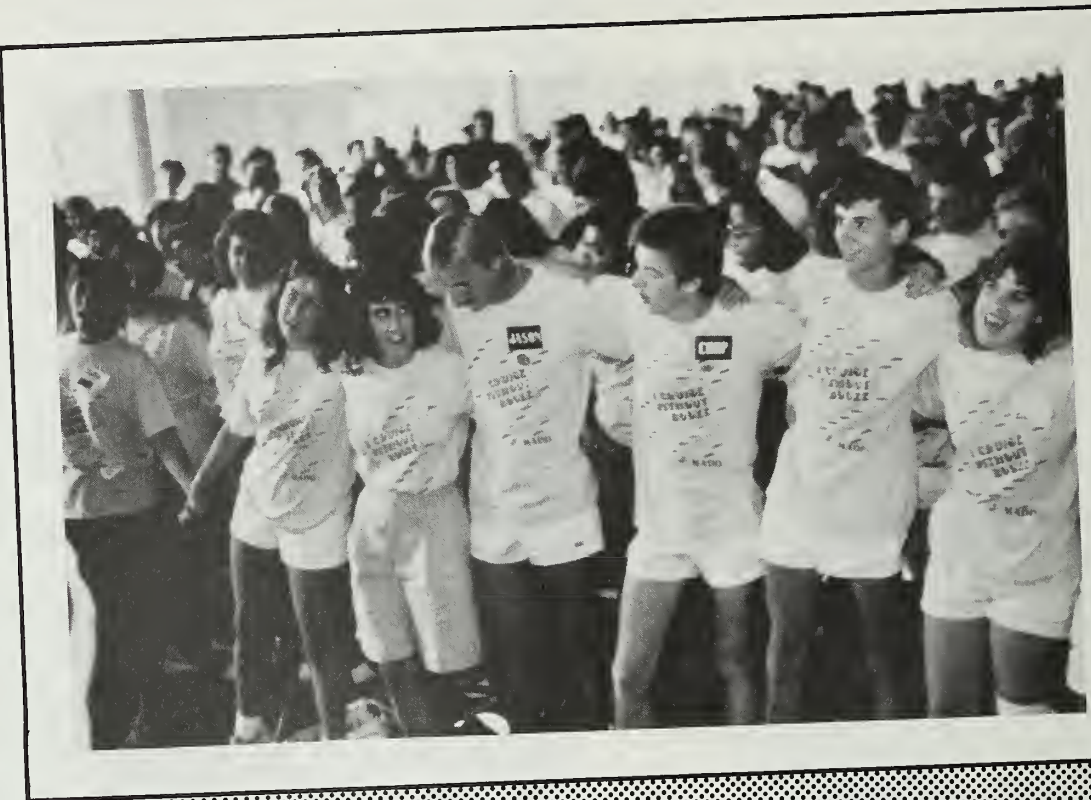
To help them do this, the Department sponsors what's called the Youth Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Project (YADAPP) Conference. Held each of the past three summers, the conference brings together as many as 400 school personnel and students to focus on prevention strategies.

"Every high school in Virginia can nominate two students and one adult to attend the 2½-day conference," says YADAPP director Marla Coleman. "We train representatives from 60 to 70 percent of the high schools in the state."

The highly popular "wellness" conference, which includes a workshop funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Nutrition Education and Training (NET) Program, seeks to raise participants' awareness of substance abuse and help them develop leadership skills they can use in organizing or expanding drug prevention efforts.

### Developing teen leaders a goal

Developing a student-based drug prevention organization requires teens



Virginia's YADAPP conference brings together high school students from throughout the state. These photos from

last year's conference show students at the general session and filling out evaluation forms.

who can form, manage, and promote peer groups. At this year's YADAPP conference, a presentation on assertive leadership, called "Organizing for Success," began the round of workshops for teens.

"The workshop identified the characteristics of good and poor leadership and the importance of distributing responsibility, which emotionally bonds others to the project," Coleman explains. "Young people don't necessarily have a feel for this."

Using worksheets, students identified a problem and worked together to reach a solution. They learned about support systems, organizational structures, and resources.

"Substance abuse prevention is a day-in, day-out effort," Mary Crozier of the Williamsburg Community Services Board told the teens. "Working together is the way to impact on peer pressure."

So that students would know they're not alone, Delores Delaney of the National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth delivered a speech

on the national youth movement to fight drug abuse.

"The kids were very excited to hear that even in their own state, there are others who are into drug prevention activities," Delaney says. "This is extremely important because it helps them feel good about themselves and what they're doing."

### Teaching kids to choose good health

Health care professionals agree that self-esteem is vital to resisting drugs and alcohol.

"It doesn't matter if you know everything there is to know about saying 'no' to drugs and alcohol," says Hope Seward of the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse.

"If you don't feel good about yourself, if you can't be assertive, if your communication skills are poor, when the time comes, you're not going to be able to say 'no.'"

At a workshop for teachers, Seward provided information about locating





## Children Say YES To Nutrition And NO To Drugs

"Social pressure can be unbearable for children. It takes courage to say no to drugs," says Tom Pate, regional deputy administrator for the Food and Nutrition Service's Midwest Regional Office (MWRO).

Last May, MWRO's child nutrition staff used the slogan, "Say YES to Nutrition, Say NO to Drugs" in sponsoring a poster design contest at one Midwest school.

The school was Martin Luther King Laboratory School in Evanston, Illinois, and the school's art instructor, Janet Fabie, was enthusiastic about the project.

"It's important for young people to be aware of drugs and what acceptable alternatives there may be," she says. "Developing the poster gave the students time to think, interpret, portray, and respond to the message in art."

### Many classes designed posters

Fabie's fifth through eighth grade students took part in the contest. Each student, using three primary colors, designed one or more 8½- by 11-inch posters. Students were encouraged to

speakers, written materials, and funds for drug prevention activities.

As Seward and other speakers stressed, choosing to have a healthy lifestyle means having no time or need for drugs and alcohol.

A workshop called "Running for Wellness" focused on strategies to get students up and moving toward a "natural high" on life.

The nutrition and fitness session, sponsored by the Virginia Nutrition Education and Training Program, challenged educators to analyze their own lifestyles through self-check lists on diet, sleep habits, and other areas that affect physical fitness.

Jane Buch, teacher, author, marathon runner, and cross-country coach, also gave the teachers ideas for physical fitness and nutrition-related activities to use with youth groups.

### Participants drew up action plans

The YADAPP conference requires something in return from the teachers and students who attend.

"After our training, the teams of participants draw up drug prevention action plans which list the tasks and implementation dates to accomplish their goals," says Coleman.

In plans developed following this year's conference, students and teachers pledged to organize "peer pressure resistance groups," have alcohol- and drug-free recreational

events; sponsor drunk driving awareness week activities; and develop ways to increase community support.

Word of YADAPP's success has resulted in plans for similar conferences in other states. And, locally, the Norfolk City (Virginia) School District will conduct a spin-off conference for 20 of its students.

### Results are worth the effort...

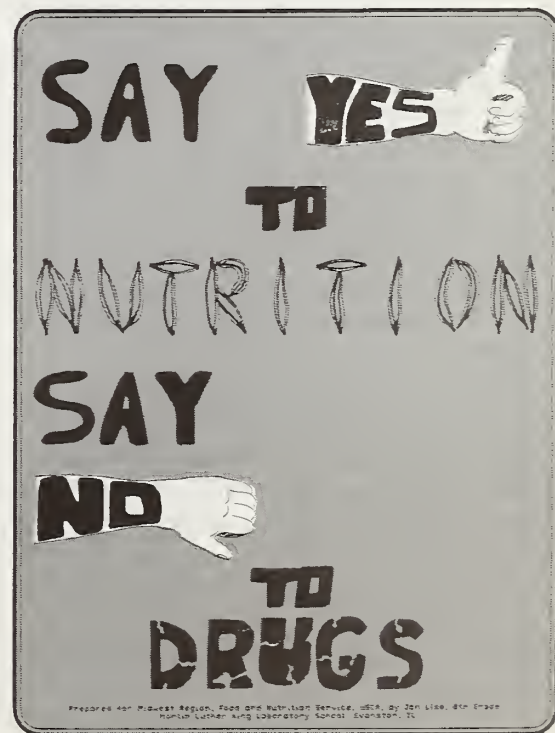
At last year's conference, Amherst (Virginia) High School received one of three Reader's Digest national scholarship awards for having an outstanding Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) chapter.

"Thanks to conferences like this one, my high school's Students Against Drunk Driving is extremely successful," Joanne Cohan, past president of the Amherst chapter, told conference participants.

"It shows that we are training kids to do things for themselves and for their classmates," one conferee said. "The theory works—kids reach kids."

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*article by Marian Wig  
photos courtesy of the Virginia  
Department of Education*



This poster by Evanston, Illinois, eighth grader John Liss was the winner in a poster contest sponsored by the Food and Nutrition Service's Midwest Regional Office in Chicago.



incorporate the slogan into the poster.

"The students had many interpretations of the theme," says Fabie. "It depended on the lifestyle they were most familiar with."

Fabie and her staff picked the 20 best posters and submitted them to a panel of MWRO judges. The poster done by eighth grader John Liss was the winner.

The poster had bold letters in black, red, and yellow, with the word "Nutrition" playfully spelled out in letters made with bananas. Two hands—one with thumbs up for nutrition, the other thumbs down for drugs—had the words "YES" and "NO" on them. At the bottom, the word "DRUGS" was in bold, red, broken letters, symbolizing the ways drugs can destroy lives.

"Good nutrition reminds me of healthy foods," says Liss. "That made me think of using the bananas as part of the letters. Drugs break things up, so I broke up the lettering. Thumbs up, thumbs down, showed what is acceptable and what is not."

#### **A good message for kids to hear**

The MWRO staff presented Liss with a certificate of appreciation and a framed copy of his poster. A framed copy of the poster was also presented to the school.

So that more children could see the poster, the regional office printed 1,600 copies and distributed them to organizations and agencies sponsoring the Summer Food Service Program in Michigan.

"In Michigan, we administer the summer program ourselves, which is unusual, so it was a natural choice for distributing the posters," says Dick Gilbert, MWRO section coordinator for the Child Care and Summer Food Service Programs and a poster contest judge.

"Teaching drug awareness at an early age is essential," he adds, "and we'd very much like to see state and local agencies come up with their own ideas for reaching kids with the 'say no' message."

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*article by Lawrence Rudman*

# Working For A Better Future

**C**ultural pride and awareness are central to drug prevention efforts for the Penobscot Indian Nation. The Nation's carefully coordinated anti-drug campaign is an example of how communities are tailoring solutions to local needs and giving children creative alternatives to using drugs.

## **Penobscot Indians Focus On Cultural Pride And Awareness**

A narrow one-lane steel and concrete bridge, 20 minutes north of Bangor, Maine, ties Indian Island Reservation to the mainland.

A pair of traffic lights hanging in the bridge's girders forces traffic to take turns entering and exiting the Penobscot Nation. Next to the old constricting bridge, a new bridge, wide enough for two lanes of traffic, is taking shape and will soon allow a freer flow of traffic over the Penobscot River.

Spokesgroup, a community group organized last year by the Penobscot Nation, is also building new bridges—"bridges over walls of alcohol and drug abuse," according to George Mitchell, WIC director for the Indian nation.

"Some people here try to say we don't have a problem," says Mitchell, "but when you see school kids sitting on the side of the road, not even seeing the cars going by, you know we have a problem."

#### **Community leaders asked to help**

Five hundred and fifty Penobscots live on the Indian Island Reservation along with 96 non-Penobscot spouses

and dependents. While alcoholism has historically been a problem, drug abuse is relatively new.

"Drugs arrived in the 1970's when members of the tribe came back from metropolitan areas as a result of settlement of land claim," says Mitchell. Land claim is the name given to the multimillion-dollar treaty settlement between the state of Maine and its native inhabitants.

Spokesgroup was organized about a year ago as a result of community concerns over substance abuse and the associated deaths and suicides. Ssipsis, the Penobscot Nation's director of human services, explains. Her one-word name, which usually begins with a lower case letter, is Penobscot for "little bird."

"Fifty people from the community, leaders and elders, were asked to figure out ways to help," she says. "They were organized into a team shaped like a wheel with spokes radiating into different areas of the tribe."

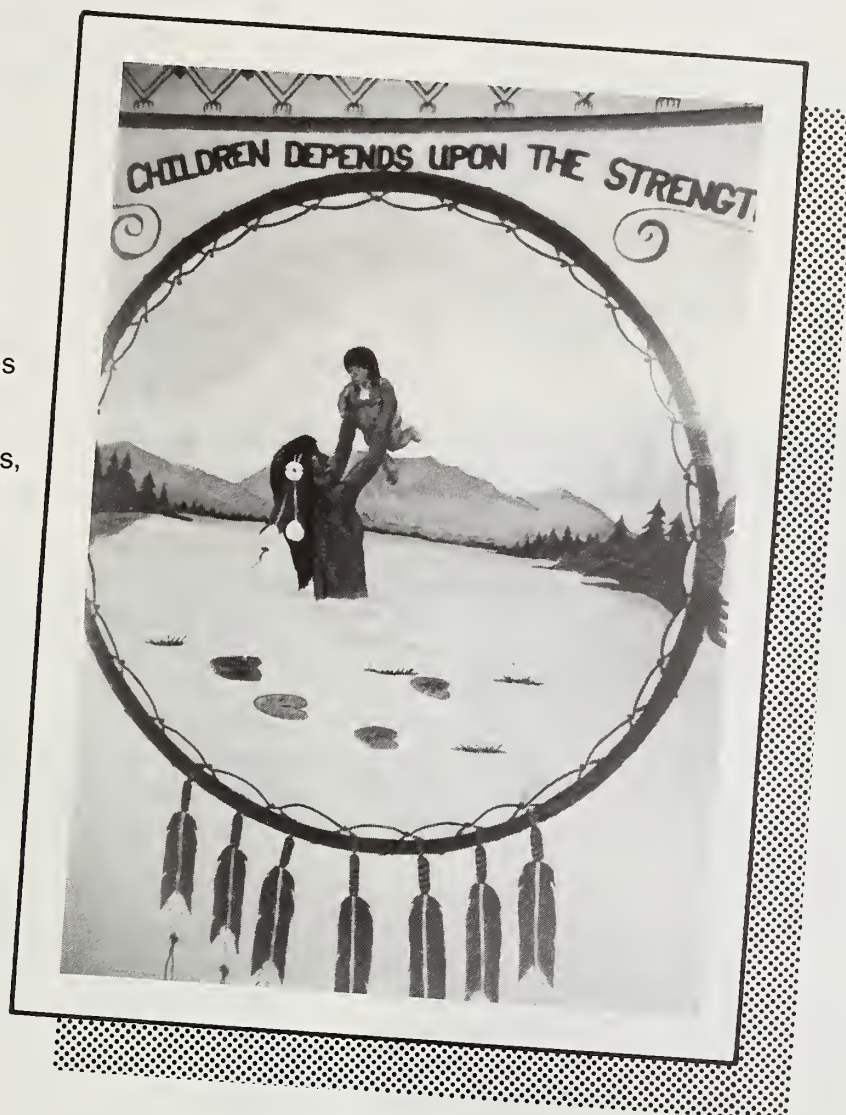
"Spokesgroup's goal is to provide positive options to energize the spirit of the community. It covers all aspects of tribal life from education to interaction between community agencies."

#### **WIC program plays key role**

The Penobscot Nation's WIC program is one of the spokes in Spokesgroup. Reading materials which spread the anti-drug message are included with monthly WIC vouchers.

In addition, screening for drug and alcohol problems is performed at each recertification. Program participants are asked if they have problems in these areas and if so, referrals for help are arranged. "When we first started





A mural on the wall of the Penobscot WIC office celebrates cultural awareness. The full quotation over the mural states, "The strength of our children depends on the strength of their parents."

this screening process, we were surprised at the honesty of our participants," says program director Mitchell.

To make the screening a more active process, WIC nutritionist Natalie Michelle provides a priority checklist for substance abuse staff to identify symptoms of nutrition-related problems associated with substance abuse. Participants found to have these symptoms are referred for help.

"Often a diet history, along with a 24-hour intake, will indicate measures needed for recovery and prevention of the dependency," says Michelle.

"One by one, we deal with the complications resulting from substance abuse. Nutrition counseling and follow-up activities are an important part of the process, and the original screening document becomes a permanent part of the written patient history."

Michelle admits progress is slow. "The results may not become apparent until we see today's children reach adult age," she says.

"We may only be taking baby steps now," Ssipsis adds, "but it's steady onward progress."

### School programs are also important

Another important spoke is the reservation's school cultural awareness program. Barry Dana, the classroom instructor, operates a number of programs both in and out of school to "promote a positive approach to identity as a Penobscot Indian."

Dana's class provides the Penobscot children with lessons in traditional Indian skills, such as basketmaking, canoe building, snowshoe making, leather tanning, tracking, and working with birch bark. His classroom is filled with the products of these lessons.

The children are enthusiastic about the class. "They get so involved in the lessons," says Dana, "the lowest grade I've given out is a B. I've found that I can't be sick—the kids get upset if I miss a day of class."

Part of the curriculum includes a native language class. Ten minutes of each school day is spent listening to tapes of a tribe member speaking Penobscot. Lessons are derived from the material on these tapes and, slowly, a nearly forgotten language is returning to the people.

### Children learn to "get high on nature"

Dana carries his cultural theme over to his extracurricular activities. He runs a series of 3-day canoeing and camping trips in the summer aimed at promoting cultural awareness and fighting substance abuse.

These trips, tied closely to the wilderness experience, are designed to provide a positive, off-reservation experience that is confidence building. By taking the children off the reservation, the source of drugs and alcohol is removed, at least temporarily.

"I try to tune the kids into nature by observing and being a part of it. It's my hope they'll learn to get high on nature instead of drugs," says Dana.

Perhaps the most dramatic of Dana's activities is the 100-mile Mount Katahdin Run. Katahdin, at 5,267 feet, is Maine's highest peak and a Penobscot holy place. "It's our Vatican," says Mitchell.

The grueling foot race to the base of Mount Katahdin is culminated with a traditional Penobscot sweet grass burning ceremony and hulled corn soup, a traditional Penobscot food. "We added a new ceremony this year, the tee-shirt-giving ceremony," Mitchell jests. "Everyone who participates in the race receives a tee shirt."

Ssipsis explains that these programs promote the anti-drug and anti-alcohol message through what she calls the "enabling concept." "They provide positive options to enable children to be healthy. These programs help maintain sobriety, provide healthy off-reservation experiences, and provide positive role models."

Are the programs making a difference? Betty McCue-Herlihy, the Penobscot Nation's clinical supervisor for substance abuse, feels they are.

"We're looking for little things to mark our progress at this point," she says, "and from what we can see, we're beginning to make inroads into substance abuse. People are becoming more aware of the problem."

"Spokesgroup seems to work," she adds, "because it comes from the community, not the outside."

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article and photo  
by Lonnie Pidel



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